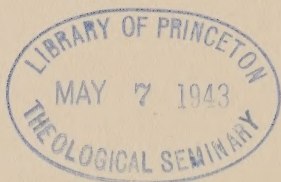


THE BAPTIST
CHURCH
IN
INDIANA

JOHN F. CADY



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The Origin and Development

of the

MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

IN

INDIANA

by

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JOHN F. CADY, Ph.D.,

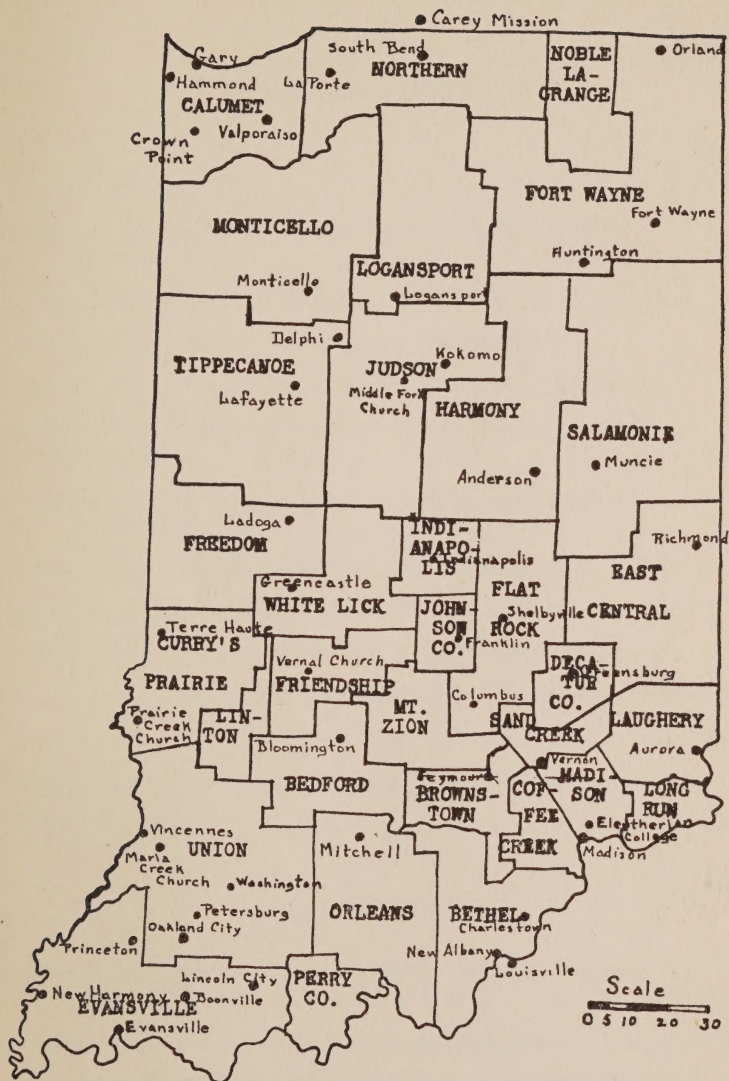
*Dean and Professor of History
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FRANKLIN COLLEGE
1942

Dedicated to my father.

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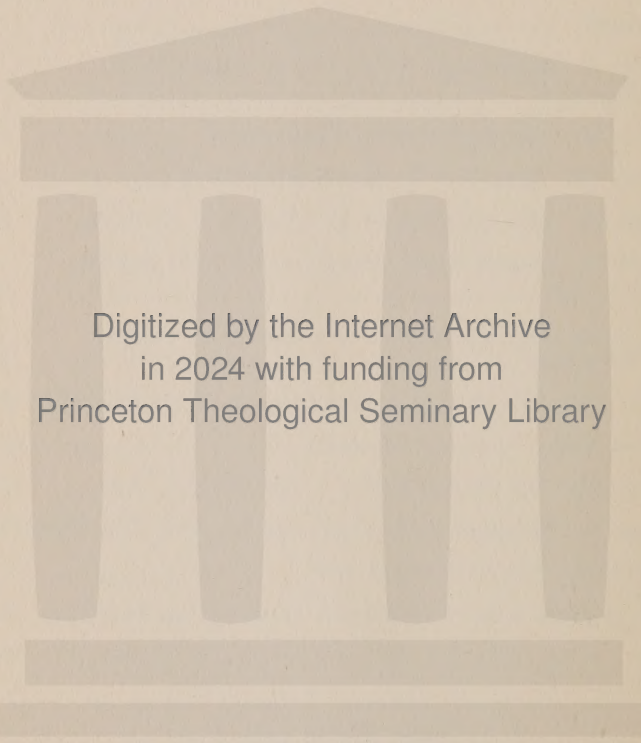
The Associational Divisions of the Indiana Baptist Convention, 1936.

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PREFACE

If students of the American scene are ever to rescue the study of religious phenomena from the abuse of the propagandist, the naiveté of the amateur historian or biographer, or, worse still, from the courses in Abnormal Psychology to which a few leading Universities have consigned it, it will be only at the cost of much patient and laborious research into primary sources of a local character.

There are few, perhaps, who would question the importance of such phenomena for the light they can throw on our social development. Dr. Jameson's classic statement of a generation ago before the American Historical Association remains unchallenged:

"He who would understand the American of past and present times," he declared, "and to that end would provide himself with data representing all classes, all periods, and all regions, may find in the history of American religion the closest approach to the continuous record he desires. . . . Millions have felt an interest in religion where thousands have felt an interest in literature or philosophy, in music or art. Millions have known little of any book save one, and that one of the most interesting of religious books, the most influential, the most powerful to mould and transform . . . No view is truthful that leaves out of account the ideals which animated those toiling millions, the thoughts concerning the universe and man which informed their minds."¹

The task of writing American church history is one

¹ J. Franklin Jameson, "The American Acta Sanctorum," *American Historical Review* XIII, 286-302. (1907-1908).

of singular difficulty. Because of the voluminous character of the fragmentary source materials available and the tendency toward emotional response, any presentation is likely to be as much a revelation of the author's mind as a commentary on the facts themselves. The most satisfactory approach seems to be to treat the church as a developing institution within a constantly changing social environment. It is to be assumed that religious conduct, no matter how bizarre, can be reasonably well explained if historical antecedents are sufficiently appreciated. Primary attention is devoted, therefore, to the attempt to understand what other people mean by what they say and do.

General significance attaches to this study because the Baptist community of Indiana has been a characteristic part of the indigenous social structure of America at large. Population movements from all points of the Eastern seaboard converged in the state during the formative years of its development. This native tradition has survived the influx of Irish and German immigration during the latter half of the nineteenth century as well as the more recent coming of workers from eastern Europe into the Lake Michigan area. Industrial and foreign influences have been present but not dominant. The Baptist constituency in particular was drawn from the humbler strata of the indigenous elements of the population.

Any discussion of the church as a social institution must proceed largely on the plane of external events, since dependable sources for the more subjective elements of the story are not easily available. To refrain from discussion in terms of special dispensations of Divine Providence is merely to recognize the limitations of historical method and not to deny that spiritual forces

are operative within the church. It must be clearly understood, therefore, that the validity of the religious experience of individual devotees is not the subject of investigation.

The records are singularly silent on the subject of interdenominational relations. The existence of neighboring church communions was undoubtedly a constant factor in the situation, but significant facts concerning this relationship are not to be found in the records. This circumstance is negative testimony to the fact that, until recent years, the Protestant community as a whole has not been particularly sensitive to the problem of Christian unity. Apparently this concern must await the development of a more mature ecclesiasticism.

From a practical point of view, the study of religious history can provide an indispensable perspective from which to consider current religious problems. The fourth dimensional time element is quite as important for clarifying the facts of the present situation as it is for an understanding of the past.

Franklin College. 1942.

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS: GEOGRAPHICAL, INSTITUTIONAL, TRADITIONAL CONDITIONS OF EARLY SETTLEMENT

The settlement of the territory which came to comprise the state of Indiana proceeded very slowly until after the close of the War of 1812. The basic problem was that of clearing the land of Indian occupancy and title.¹ Until 1803, the only areas available for settlement were Clark's Grant opposite Louisville, the wedgeshaped "Gore" district along the Ohio border, and the area around the Indian post town of Vincennes. Fort Wayne was a fortress outpost in the Indian country. Land purchases made across the southern part of the state from 1803 to 1809² were an important factor in precipitating hostilities with Tecumseh at Tippecanoe in 1811, a struggle which was shortly merged with the American attack upon Canada. The cumulative effect of the injustices suffered by the natives and the ravages attributable to the white man's diseases and his whiskey were as much responsible for the collapse of Indian resistance

1 Governor Harrison affirmed that he would not countenance the idea that "one of the fairest portions of the globe remain . . . the haunt of a few wretched savages, when it seems destined by the Creator to give support to a large population and be the seat of civilization, of science, and of true religion." *Indiana Historical Society Publications*. (Indianapolis, 1895), IV, 264-265.

2 Logan Esarey, *History of Indiana*, 2 vols. (Fort Wayne, 1924), I, 237-239, 374.

as was the military campaign.³ Settlers began to pour into the state from Kentucky in particular in a continuously growing stream after 1815. In 1820, only four years after statehood, Indiana claimed a population of almost 200,000, the number reaching double that figure by 1830⁴ in spite of the large emigration to points still farther west.

Some of the settlers crossed the Ohio river to be free from association with the institution of slavery.⁵ Other reasons were that land titles in Kentucky were notoriously uncertain, and there was no provision for education such as was found in the government-surveyed area of Indiana. The virgin wilderness to the north of the river also offered rich rewards both materially and in political preferment for those first on the ground.⁶ Once arrived in Indiana, however, the settlers were loath to strike root. Better opportunities seemed continually to beckon them on. Religious institutions were particularly embarrassed by the inveterate restlessness of the frontier population. Church records definitely suggest that in most early Indiana communities the number of transient residents at any one time far exceeded the permanent population.⁷

3 Henry Adams, *History of the United States*. 6 vols. (New York, 1896), VI, 69-71. Benjamin Drake, *The Life of Tecumseh and His Brother the Prophet*. (Cincinnati, 1841). Governor Harrison appreciated the injustice suffered by the Indians, yet as a politician he could do little to correct it. See *Messages and Papers of William Henry Harrison*. (Indianapolis, 1922), 233.

4 Esarey, I, 274, 397.

5 The slavery question did not, however, constitute a matter of difference between churches on the two banks of the Ohio river sufficient to disrupt fellowship.

6 Karl Postel, a European visitor, wrote despairingly in 1828 of the "wandering spirit of the inhabitants." Harlow Lindley, *Indiana as Seen by early travellers* (1916), 524.

7 Two examples can be cited. From 1818 to 1828, the Laughtery Baptist Association (average annual membership

Although many idlers and adventurers could doubtless be found, the frontier population of Indiana as a whole was repeatedly described by outside observers in the 1820's as sober and industrious, and possessing great energy of character.⁸ The push into the central and northern areas of the state was augmented in the twenties by traffic along the newly completed National Road and the Erie Canal. It was the settlers who came via Kentucky, however, who exerted the primary influence on the early character of the Baptist church in Indiana.

The difficulties of travel and transportation, the prevalence of fever, the wearisome labor of reducing a wilderness to civilized habitation were not the only problems faced. Two major economic dislocations descended upon the western people between 1819 and 1838. Both produced great hardship which aggravated the migrant tendencies of the people. The mania for speculation in land which developed during the thirties impaired the moral fibre as well as the economic status of the population. It was under such discouraging circumstances that the early Baptist churches had to attempt to establish themselves within the new country.

Early Centers of Baptist Development.

Among those of the early settlers who were religiously inclined the Baptist church could claim a disproportionately large number. A mighty revivalist wave

584) received no less than 433 persons into the churches by letter, while 388 letters were granted to departing members, a total 40 per cent greater than the resident membership at any one time. The White River Association had almost a thousand accessions and dismissals by letter within the course of nine years following 1823, in a total average membership of less than 600. Laughery AM, 1818-1848; White River AM, 1823-1832.

8 *Indiana as Seen*, 180, 232, 235, 524.

had swept over the churches of Kentucky and Tennessee in the years immediately following the turn of the century. It has sometimes been referred to as the "Second Awakening." The Baptists probably gained more from this revival than did any other denominational group.⁹ In Kentucky, for example, Baptist churches increased in number from 106 to 219 during the years 1800 to 1803 and their membership more than tripled. Augmented considerably by later immigration the totals reached 491 churches and almost 32,000 members by the end of the second decade of the century. Baptists have since remained the most numerous denomination within the state of Kentucky.¹⁰ It was during this period of rising Baptist predominance in Kentucky that the emigration of her citizens to Indiana took place on such a large scale. Until the denomination was torn asunder by schism in the twenties and thirties, it bid fair to reach the first rank numerically in Indiana as well.¹¹

The organization of Baptist churches almost kept pace with the advance of settlement itself. The Silver Creek Church appeared as early as 1798 near Charlestown, Indiana, opposite the falls of the Ohio. It was the first Protestant church within the state. Another church was organized in the populous Whitewater valley in the "Gore" in 1802, and a third in the lower Wabash valley on the western side of the state in 1806. The

9 J. H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists from 1769 to 1884*. 2 volumes. (Cincinnati, 1885), I, 452-453, 496-504, 535-540. Whereas other denominations depended much on camp meetings, most of the Baptist accessions came in connection with the routine meeting of the churches, according to evidence presented by Spencer.

10 W. W. Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier, The Baptists* (New York, 1930), 23-24.

11 Spencer, I, 488-496; Esarey, I, 320-321; H. H. Haskins, *Activities of the Baptists in the Northwest Territory, 1815-1850*. MS. (Harvard dissertation, 1914), 53.

Crooked Creek Church, near Madison, and various others followed in 1807. Two Baptist Associations were organized almost simultaneously in 1809 by the more or less isolated groups of churches in the Whitewater and Wabash valleys. The area near the falls of the Ohio was naturally the center of greatest Baptist strength because this was the principal route of entry. In 1812, these churches severed their connections with the parent Long Run Association of Kentucky and organized their own Silver Creek Association with nine constituent churches.¹² No other denomination matched this extensive development in Indiana territory at so early a period.

The organization of new Baptist churches on the frontier was a significant exercise of indigenous democratic capacities. The initiative was taken by the prospective congregation, who assembled their church letters and drew up Articles of Faith and Rules of Decorum, usually copied verbatim from an older record. The next step was usually to invite neighboring churches, at least three or four, to send their elders to act as a special council or presbytery for the completion of the organization.¹³ Such was not invariably the procedure, however. Sometimes visiting elders present were asked to participate as individuals only, without having been

12 The Wabash District Association included five churches and antedated that of the Whitewater valley by a few months only. The Silver Creek Association included the following constituent churches: Silver Creek, Crooked Creek (later called Mt. Pleasant and Madison), Fourteen Mile Creek, Knob Creek, Indian Creek, Upper and Lower Blue River, Camp Creek, and Salem.

13 Otter Creek CM, 1848; Edwardsport CM, 1858. Older churches such as Delphi were called upon for such assistance on an average of once a year. Elder Jesse Vawter of Madison helped organize no less than twelve churches and three Associations in neighboring territories. See Grace Vawter Bicknell, *The Vawter Family in America* (Indianapolis, 1905) 11-19.

specifically sent by any church.¹⁴ On rare occasions, the organization was effected by the holders of church letters without any outside help whatsoever.¹⁵ In the course of time, a more regular mode of procedure was worked out.¹⁶ The new body was competent immediately to receive members, to elect officers, and to transact other business. Instances can be found where the new congregation proceeded at the conclusion of the council's action to ordain a man from their own membership to act as pastor.¹⁷ The new organizations were weak individually, of course, but the fact that they quickly blanketed the southern third of the state is a significant commentary on the prevalence and vitality of the sect.

14 Sharon CM, 1810; Vernon CM, 1816. The Sharon minute reads as follows: "Not having the Opportunity of Applying to a sister Church for their Eldership, We called upon Elder George Pope and A Brother with him . . . whom some of us Know Being members of his Church in North Carolina—To Constitute A Church." In the instance at Vernon elders W. T. Stott Sr., and John Vawter officiated.

15 Harbert's Creek (Wirt) CM, 1818.

16 The usual procedure consisted of the following steps: election of a moderator and clerk by the council, a service of "praise and prayer," the examination of church letters of prospective members, the approval of articles of faith, rules of decorum, and sometimes the suggested covenant, secret deliberation, a preaching service, followed by the subscription of the names of the constituent members to the documents previously approved by the council. The conclusion of the process involved the giving of a charge to new members and the extension of the right hand of fellowship.

17 Middle Fork CM, 1851; Union CM, 1867, Burns City CM, 1867. Sometimes an intermediate step was taken in the designation of a small group of the membership of the given church, remotely situated, as an "arm" of the mother church. Such a group could hold meetings and receive members when a minister was present. When the group became strong enough they would be given church letters and be assisted by the mother church in forming a new organization. Examples of such procedure can be found in Vernal CM, 1834; First Prairie Creek CM 1842; Valparaiso CM, 1858; Franklin CM, 1832.

The region of greatest Baptist strength lay within a triangular area with the base lying along the Ohio river from the falls to the Ohio state line and its apex near the site of the future state capital. Throughout this region continuous contact was maintained with older Baptist centers extending into Kentucky, and the leadership of the churches was of a high order.¹⁸ Growth was very rapid. The Silver Creek Association in particular mothered scores of new organizations, as well as a number of new Associations which in turn became centers of further expansion.¹⁹ The mortality of the individual churches here as elsewhere was high, but the losses were easily made up. The harmony which prevailed among the half dozen contiguous Associations of this region added greatly to their strength. It is a notable fact that for two or three generations the ablest and

18 Near Madison lived elders Jesse and Philemon (d. 1814) Vawter, men of great influence. John Vawter, eldest son of Jesse, was also an outstanding figure. The four sons of William McCoy (d. 1813) of Silver Creek church, Isaac, James, John, and Royce long sustained the high traditions of their father. Thomas Hill Jr. and Sr. led the Coffee Creek Association along with elders Joel Butler, W. T. Stott Sr., and John Stott, son of the latter. Abraham Stark who later distinguished himself in the Curry's Prairie Association near Terre Haute began his Indiana ministry in the Silver Creek Association in 1815. Mordecai Cole came from the same area; elders Caleb Moncrief and John B. New were licensed by the Vernon Church, etc. See Coffee Creek AM, 1839, and W. T. Stott *Indiana Baptist History, 1798-1908* (Franklin, 1908), 37, 65ff, 92ff, 110.

19 Thus the neighboring Blue River Association was formed in 1816, that of White River to the northwest in 1821, Coffee Creek in 1822, Lost River in 1825. Coffee Creek Association was parent in turn to three other Associations, Madison (1833), Brownstown (1835), and Sand Creek (1844). The Flat Rock Association (1822) in the region of Franklin drew its constituency largely from the same sources. The latter had 29 member churches in 1829. Laughery Association, organized in the southeastern corner of the state in 1818 became strong under the leadership of Thomas Curtis, Jesse Holman, and John Watts. See map, p. 3.

most progressive indigenous leadership of the Baptist denomination in Indiana came from the churches of this area.²⁰

Elsewhere within the state the churches were widely separated, the leadership was less dependable, and religious vitality less marked. The Whitewater Association group of churches located along the Ohio border grew stronger for a time, but they failed to keep pace with progressive developments, with the result that the Association became a rigidly conservative body. The churches lying in the valley of the West Fork of White River suffered seriously during the twenties and thirties from the prevalence of disputation and strife. In all the area of the Wabash District Association, in the vicinity of Vincennes, only the Maria Creek Church, of which Isaac McCoy was the pastor from 1809 to 1818, seems to have made steady progress.²¹ Churches comprising the Salem Association in the extreme southwestern corner of the state separated amicably from the Wabash District group in 1822. Other churches lying to the north of Vincennes split off from the same parent organization to form the Union Association in 1824. The details of the latter schism will be treated in a later connection. The Wabash Association became eventually an Illinois body. East of the Salem Association, bordering the Ohio river, the Little Pigeon Association of United Baptists was formed in 1822. The churches comprising the latter

²⁰ The Coffee Creek AM reveal that at least eleven churches dropped completely from the picture during the first decade of its existence. The leading Associations were those of Indianapolis, Flat Rock, Sand Creek, Coffee Creek, Madison, and Laughery.

²¹ *The Latter Day Luminary* I, pp. 510-512. The Little Village and Prairie Creek churches developed from the Maria Creek church in 1817 and 1818 respectively. The town of Princeton in 1817 had no church building among its 100 houses. See *Indiana as Seen*, 105, 113.

body had previously been affiliated with the Goshen Association of Kentucky.²²

The crux of the problem of the survival of individual churches lay in the difficulty of securing able leadership. For one thing, the membership was always on the move.²³ Institutions might continue to function because of their significance as centers of community life,²⁴ but without religious vitality. Baptist practices which operated effectively in a rural setting, furthermore, could not easily adapt themselves to urban communities. For many years the denomination was weak in the cities, and almost all of the early promotional work in the centers of population had to be done by general missionary agencies. Far-visioned men were also needed to keep differences of opinion on such questions as predestination, closed communion, and revivalist methods from splitting churches asunder.²⁵ Any disgruntled person

22 Stott, 61, 122, 127, 129.

23 The obituary of elder Isaiah Blankenship (Vernon CM, 1822) reveals that he had been a member of four different churches during his fourteen years residence in Indiana. He had aided in organizing two of them. Another elder of the same church had resided for a time in fourteen different communities during his migration from Massachusetts to Indiana.

24 The local geographical connections are clearly reflected in the names which they adopted, such as the "Baptized Church of Christ" on Ox Fork, Grassey Creek, Whiskey Run, Indian Creek, Brushy Fork, or Spice Valley. See Blue River, Bethel, Harbert's Creek, Sharon CM.

25 As early as 1808 the Silver Creek church excluded members for associating with the "Means Baptists" and "Universalist Dunkards." On the other hand the Free Will Baptists had a foothold on the Ohio state border and in southwestern Indiana. The Vernal church was badly perturbed in 1821 when some of its members "saw no impropriety . . . in openly Communing with other denominations." The same question split the Fourteen-Mile Church from the parent Silver Creek church in 1809. See Silver Creek CM, 1808, 1821; Vernal CM, 1821, 1824; Fourteen Mile CM, 1809; C. W. Cauble, *Disciples of Christ in Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1930), 30-34; Spencer, I, 483-485.

who could command a following could, of course, form a new church body with minimum of difficulty.

Another obstacle to religion encountered in frontier Indiana was derived from the scramble for land.²⁶ As immigrants started pouring into Indiana after 1815 the price of staple products became for a time abnormally high, and speculation developed in land values. Materialism was rampant, the effect was demoralizing, for the gambling fever could not be stemmed. Religion could not thrive in such an atmosphere.²⁷ Baptist churches were particularly susceptible, since even their elders were invariably occupied in the ordinary economic pursuits of the community. Most churches were, therefore, obliged to be content with maintaining only minimum moral demands within the bounds of their membership. The bubble of land speculation burst in 1819. For the next five years a profound depression gripped the state. Export trade was almost dead, and real estate values collapsed.²⁸ This depression marks a revival of interest in religious affairs, but under political circumstances that were far from promising as will shortly be apparent.

Inherited Principles and Prejudices.

The early Baptists of Indiana entertained certain deeply embedded social traditions and prejudices growing out of their colonial experiences. The original home connections of a large proportion of the first immigrants could be traced to North Carolina or Virginia. From this

²⁶ John Taylor reports as follows on a similar situation in Kentucky at any earlier period: "There were a number of Baptists scattered around, but we all seemed cold as death—everybody had so much to do that religion was scarcely talked of; even on Sundays all our meetings seemed on the name of the thing, with but little of the Spirit of devotion." See Sweet, 150.

²⁷ Spencer, I, 279-280; Haskins, 8-9.

²⁸ Esarey, I, 280.

area, therefore, denominational beginnings must be traced.

The Baptist church as a numerous sect in Virginia and North Carolina dated from the so-called "Great Awakening," which affected the region during the two decades directly preceding the Revolutionary War. In its emotional and pietistic aspects, the "Awakening" appealed to the humbler people, particularly those in the back counties. The movement was, in fact, a phase of the social revolt of these folk against the political and social domination exerted by the tidewater aristocracy.²⁹

The supporters of the revival took the name "Separates" or "New Lights." The extravagant physical demonstrations which characterized their services, and other irregularities of thought and practice called forth the most virulent condemnation of conservative classes generally.³⁰ Educated opinion, tinged by rationalist ideas current in England, was decidedly unsympathetic with the movement. The professionally-trained Anglican clergy were instinctively jealous of any encroachment upon their official ministerial prerogatives.³¹ Adult immersion came to be in time an important symbol of the Separatist group, and although they frequently lacked a formulated creed they gradually took the name of "Separate Baptists."³²

The Separates were especially severe in attacking the established Anglican church. The latter was governed by oligarchic vestries and manned by a clergy

29 Wesley M. Gewehr, *The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790* (Durham, 1930), 89-102, 250.

30 *Ibid.*, 1-18. Reports declare that a large proportion of a congregation would often be prostrate on the floor, eyes fixed, muscles out of control, with a medley of groans, songs, and exhortations adding to the general confusion.

31 T. C. Hall, *The Religious Background of American Culture*. (Boston, 1930), 157.

32 Gewehr, 106-114.

whose piety and conduct conformed by reputation, at least, to the loose standards of the planter aristocracy. As a reaction from the extravagance and vanity of the Anglicans, the Separates made much of the virtue of plainness of dress.³³ The radicals were also uncompromising in their defiance of the regulations which the ruling classes attempted to impose upon them. They flouted the laws of the colony requiring the licensing of all preachers and meeting houses; they demanded religious liberty as a natural elemental right; they denounced the Virginia Toleration Act of 1772 which the less extreme Presbyterians and the Regular Baptists were inclined to accept.³⁴ By sermon and pamphlet they attacked the Anglican form of service and sacramental practice, episcopal modes of government, and the worldliness of an educated clergy.

The dominant political group replied with abusive and violent measures. The revivalists were publicly stigmatized as contemptible, indecent, and viciously deluded creatures who were endangering the established order. They were repeatedly subjected to fines and imprisonment for breaking the law. Religious meetings were broken up by mob violence, and leaders were plunged head-foremost in the mud in violent mockery of their insistence upon immersion.

Such persecution served principally to increase the enthusiasm of the Separates. Their ministers effectively dramatized their struggle by preaching to large audiences from the windows of jails. What they lacked in social prestige they made up in the assumption of the rightness of their cause and their superior moral rectitude.

³³ *Ibid.*, 19-34; Albert Henry Newman, *A History of the Baptist Church in the United States* (New York, 1915), sixth edition, 242-45, 300-302.

³⁴ Gewehr, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-132, 200-212; Sweet, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-16.

This social revolution in Virginia and the Carolinas eventually merged with the general struggle for political independence from England. In the South as in New England, hostility to the Tory episcopacy was a major issue in the mind of the patriot party. The political connection is seen in the Baptist demand of 1775 raised in Virginia for separation of church and state. James Madison was one of those who championed this proposal of the Baptists during this decade of its agitation. It was granted by the Virginia legislature in 1785. This notable political victory of the Baptists, together with their increased political importance and steadily improving economic position, went far to remove from the Separates the social stigma deriving from their earlier vagaries.³⁵ This prolonged and sometimes bitter struggle had its counterpart in less extreme form in neighboring colonies. It left its mark upon the Baptists who moved westward through the mountains.

A second contributing factor to the heritage of the western Baptists was the creedal standard fixed by the so-called Regular Baptists of the Philadelphia Association. The Philadelphia group of churches was the best established and most aggressive of the American Baptist communions dating from pre-Awakening times. They maintained intimate and continuous relations with the English and Welsh Baptist bodies. It was the Philadelphia Association that was primarily responsible for the founding of Brown University. They represented, on the whole, a somewhat higher social stratum than that of the Separate Baptist constituency and were inclined to be opposed to the exhibitionism and radicalism

³⁵ Gewehr, 106-133, 209, 258-262. Jefferson also supported this measure. Says Gewehr, 200: "More than any other group in Virginia, the Baptists made popular the idea of religious liberty."

of the revivalists. They subscribed to the Philadelphia Confession of 1742, a strongly Calvinistic document based upon the earlier London Confession of 1689.³⁶ Gaining an early foothold in the Charleston Association in the Carolinas and in the Ketocton Association in northern Virginia, the Regular Baptists did much to fix the doctrine of the churches of the South.³⁷

During the post-Revolutionary period, the Regular Baptist Associations in the southern states exerted an increasing influence over their "Separate" brethren. When the two Baptist groups of Virginia coalesced in 1787 to form the United Baptists, it was the smaller Regular Baptist segment that fixed the institutional standards of the new body. This same phenomenon appeared in 1801 when a similar union was attempted in Kentucky. The Separate Baptist communion had paid little attention to matters of organization and consequently lacked institutional character. Having won their fight against the Anglicans in the Revolutionary era they were left without any unifying principle capable of counteracting the inherently disruptive aspects of their democratic church polity. Hence came the growing predominance of Regular Baptists standards of organization.

But the Regularized Separates were never very happy

36 W. J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*. (Philadelphia, 1911), 215-299. The London Confession of 1689 had its standard set in the Restoration period, during which time the Baptists were in a kindly mood toward the equally persecuted Presbyterians and Independents in England. They were glad, therefore, to disarm their critics by emphasizing points of agreement with the doctrines of other dissenting groups. English Baptists had largely abandoned this position by the end of the nineteenth century.

37 B. E. Riley, *A History of the Baptists in the Southern States East of the Mississippi* (Philadelphia, 1898), 24-26; Newman, 287-288; Spencer, I, 105-110. Of twenty ministers known to have been Separates east of the mountains, eighteen of them became Regulars in Kentucky.

under the creedal yoke which they had assumed. In the Kentucky union of 1801, for example, it was explicitly reserved by the so-called United Baptists that the articles of faith adopted should not be allowed to exercise tyrannical power over consciences, and that certain deviations from the strict dogma of predestination should not constitute a bar to fellowship. Outside of this larger body of United Baptists, some of the Separates, self-styled "New Lights," still maintained their original identity. Putting greater dependence upon the inspiration of the moment, they apparently did not wish to embarrass such spontaneous truth by the logical implications of creedal commitments. They preferred to say that the Old and New Testaments were the only rule of faith and practice.³⁸ Smaller groups flatly refused to accept predestination at all. Many individuals from these protesting bodies drifted in the course of time into denominations emphasizing Arminian beliefs, such as the Methodists, or into those rejecting all creedal statements whatsoever, such as the Disciples.³⁹

Although the early Baptist churches in Indiana were nominally almost all of the "Regular" variety, they really came from this hybrid United Baptist origin.⁴⁰ Underneath their structure of creedal statements certain additional prejudices arising from their Separate Baptist heritage can be identified. In the first place, the Baptists generally were strongly opposed to the education of ministers. If God called a man to preach, it was considered impertinent in the extreme to attempt to educate him subsequent to such a call. The most influential

³⁸ Sweet, 22-26. From the terms of the union in Kentucky in 1801.

³⁹ Spencer, I, 167-177, 200-212; Sweet, 7-8, 22-27, 417 ff.

⁴⁰ The name "United Baptists," adopted in Virginia in 1787, was not widely used west of the mountains. Only one Association in Indiana, that of Little Pigeon, used it.

preachers they had known were uneducated men. This is attributable to the fact that there was scarcely a single college-bred man among the early Baptist leaders of Virginia.⁴¹ Piety and demonstrated ability were the only essential qualifications of a minister, and the individual churches usually called out, licensed, and ordained their pastors from among their own membership. Such men probably were more congenial to the thoughts, emotions, and habits of speech of the congregations, but the churches were nevertheless condemned by such practice to the futility of tugging at their own intellectual bootstraps.⁴²

In the second place, the deep-seated opposition of early Indiana Baptists to a professional clergy led them to refuse to assume any official responsibility as congregations for the financial support of their ministers. A person should preach because he was called by God to do so, and not because of any financial considerations involved. The congregations frequently rendered voluntary aid in subscriptions of food, clothing, and money, and they sometimes donated labor on the pastors' farms. For a long time, however, they refused to accept any specified financial obligation, and the first salaries were but the extensions of the earlier aids. Most of the ministering elders were farmers; some were mechanics and tradesmen.⁴³ The effect of such a tradition upon the

41 Newman, 303, 380. Virginia had no Baptist College until well along into the nineteenth century.

42 Sweet, 36-39, 423, 429, 480; Gewehr, 134-137. So distrustful were they of human learning that they protested against using books other than the Bible for teaching children to read. Sometimes a note of jealousy appears, directed toward the better educated Presbyterian clergy in Indiana. See *Holman Correspondence*, letter of Jan. 28, 1831.

43 Sweet, 36-39, 423, 429. This question of salaries was raised in Elkhorn Association, Kentucky, in the eighties, but was not definitely settled. Elders Phileman Vawter and Isaac McCoy were both excellent mechanics.

churches, reënforced as it was by the impoverished condition of the people, gave rise to very serious problems within the Indiana churches.

A final element in the Eastern heritage of the Indiana Baptists, with roots in both their southern and New England backgrounds, was their fierce insistence upon the independence of each church community from all external control, either civil or ecclesiastical. The local church, functioning as a pure democracy, was considered competent to decide all matters of business, faith, or discipline, covering an almost unlimited variety of topics. On occasion aid might be asked of a council assembled from neighboring churches, and advice might be requested of the Association, but final decisions on all questions lay with the local church itself. It was inevitable that such a tradition, so strongly entertained, would make the effective promotion of any general denominational program extremely difficult.⁴⁴

To some extent the opposition to an educated and salaried ministry was modified by the early arrival of Baptist leaders from New England. The reason for the difference is not far to seek. The political fight of this latter group had been not with the Anglicans but with Puritan Congregationalists. They were, therefore, much less enamoured of the Calvinistic creed of the Puritans and likewise less confident of the all-sufficiency of the local congregation than were their Hoosier brethren with southern antecedents. Young New England preachers, represented by such men as Ezra Fisher of Indian-

44 Gewehr, 188-196; Sweet, 19-22; 152-153. P. G. Mode, *Frontier Spirit in American Christianity* (New York, 1923), 175-185. Presbyterian preachers were never without some training, and Methodist circuit riders had quarterly stipends and book allowances upon which to depend, advantages which told heavily in their favor in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century.

apolis, W. M. Pratt of Crawfordsville, A. R. Hinckley of Franklin, and George Matthews of New Albany, exerted a decidedly salutary influence in broadening the outlook of the Baptists of the State in the thirties and forties.⁴⁵

The evidences of the Regular Baptist background can also be identified. It has already been remarked that the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 on which the Regular Baptist creed was based was strongly predestinarian. It affirmed, for example, that God had foreknowledge of evil as well as good, and that the redemption of man was provided for even before his fall. The Holy Spirit operated for the regeneration, not of all men, but only of the elect. Mere legal repentance, growing out of prudential considerations or fear, was not sufficient; God alone was the author of repentance unto salvation, and His grace alone enabled the elect to believe. He would not allow such to continue in sin, but would recall them that they might persevere to the end. If any should fall away permanently, that would be irrefutable evidence that they were not of the elect. Such principles were generally accepted by Indiana churches.

The influence of the Philadelphia Association may also be seen, in the general practice of licensing and ordaining Baptist preachers in a formal way. The mere urge to preach was not sufficient, and an uncontrolled itineracy such as had prevailed in Virginia during the "Awakening" was frowned upon in many quarters. Warnings were issued periodically in both Virginia and Kentucky Regular Baptist Associations against listening to straggling ministers who lacked proper credentials.⁴⁶

The articles of faith of typical Indiana Baptist

⁴⁵ Sweet, 3-7, 16-17; *Jesse L. Holman Correspondence MS.*

⁴⁶ Gewehr, 258-262.

churches were abbreviated in form, but contained only occasional variations from the basic assertions of the Philadelphia model.⁴⁷ Because of its central importance, the treatment of predestination deserves to be considered at some length. The most common statement was as follows:

"God from eternity proposed to save a people from their sins for his holy name's sake, and in his infinite wisdom he devised the plan and appointed every means necessary to accomplish the end of their redemption which he effected in his own time by the operation of the Holy Spirit."⁴⁸

The minor variations from the standardized creed were usually in the direction of modifying the rigor of this central article of faith. The Ebenezer church creed (1822), for instance, asserted that the fact that faith and repentance were gifts of the Holy Spirit "doth not Exonerate any that hear the gospel from their incumbent duty to believe it and repent of their sins." God gave to all that were willing to believe the power to accept. Other creeds omitted the word "a" before "people" in the first sentence of the article.⁴⁹ Another

47 They usually treated, in order, the following topics: the trinity, the divine authority of the Scriptures, total human depravity and salvation by grace alone, God's display of power as creator (often omitted), predestination, justification solely by the imputed righteousness of Christ, final perseverance of "those born of the Spirit of God," good works as the result of faith and as an evidence of grace, reservation of the Lord's Supper and baptism for professed believers, immersion as the only proper mode of baptism, the sanctity of the Sabbath, resurrection of the bodies of the just and unjust followed by judgment, and, finally, the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the unending punishment of the wicked. See Sharon, Mt. Pleasant, Vernal CM.

48 Delphi CM; see also Sharon, Mt. Pleasant, Vernal, and Wirt CM. In some of the minute books the articles of faith are presented in an unconventional form, as a kind of running commentary made by one who had the formal creed before him.

49 Ebenezer and Wirt CM.

common predestinarian formulation was to the effect that "the elect were chosen in Christ before the world began, . . . [and] shall in time be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost . . . and cannot fall away."⁵⁰

Apparently the only other doctrinal emphasis which rivalled this primary one was the repeated condemnation of so-called "alien immersion," or baptism at the hands of one who himself had not been properly baptized.⁵¹ This latter principle eventually came to be associated with the Old-Landmarkist Baptists of Kentucky and Tennessee, and it long remained a moot question before the churches of the southwestern corner of the State of Indiana, in particular.

It must be remembered, however, that the institutional aspects of these frontier churches were not thoroughly crystallized. Perhaps the most characteristic attribute of western society at that time was its intensified individualism. As long as the spirit of jealous independence prevailed within the churches, no particular formulation could become obligatory upon all. In the course of time, variations of viewpoint and leadership became more sharply defined. The character of the churches in their new homes was to be primarily the product of subsequent history not that of their earlier backgrounds.⁵²

50 Little Pigeon United Baptist AM; Valparaiso and Madison CM. Some statements included additional articles concerning the ecclesiastical and disciplinary authority of the local church, and a number expressed the belief that the end of the world was approaching.

51 R. A. Chapman, *Theological Interests of Early American Baptist Churches* (Chicago, 1920), 27-47; Newman, 272-278.

52 H. W. Rowe, *The History of Religion in the United States*. (New York, 1924), 87-88. As early as 1808-09 some Indiana churches were rigidly insistent on predestination, while others flatly rejected it.

CHAPTER II

THE ANTI-MISSION CONTROVERSY

No controversy into which the Baptists of Indiana have ever been drawn surpasses in virulence and in extent of misunderstanding the division over the issue of missions and benevolent enterprises. The difficulty was contributed to by the attempt of the Eastern agencies to secure premature acceptance of their program by the Western Baptists. But it also brought to germination the seeds of many side issues of controversy which were already present within the churches. In the prevailing atmosphere of partizanship, minor differences of opinion were magnified into major problems and energies were exhausted which were sorely needed in more constructive work. Direct appeals to the provincial prejudices of western society on the part of the protagonists were supported by scriptural sanctions so as to grant to considerations of expediency a permanence and sanctity which they could not otherwise have attained. Many of these aroused prejudices long survived the real issues of the controversy, to become barriers to the continuing advance of the church in later years.

How the Baptist Missionary Movement Began

Missionary work of a local or domestic character was quite common among Eastern Baptists in colonial times. Associations assisted member congregations in the erection of meeting houses, and often supplied destitute communities with preaching. They collected li-

braries and aided in the training of ministerial students.¹ The extension of such work to more distant regions of America was first undertaken by the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society, organized in 1802, under the inspiration of the example of the English missionary, William Carey. Through the published organ of the Society, the *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, attention was persistently directed to the religious needs of the American West. For more than a decade, however, its active program was largely confined to the multiplication of local societies within New England churches.²

The major impetus for projecting an organization comprehending the whole of the Baptist denomination came in 1813-1814, as a result of the appeals of Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice for support of their work in Burma. In response to this challenge, a General Missionary Convention of Baptists assembled at Philadelphia in May of 1814. Thirty-three delegates from eleven states were present. The Constitution which they adopted provided for a general Convention to meet every three years, the delegates to come from societies contributing one hundred dollars or more per year to the enterprise. A Board of Commissioners of twenty-one members would act as the executive staff during the interim between meetings. Luther Rice himself returned from Burma to take over the active direction of the affairs of the Triennial Convention.

The return of peace with England in 1815 and the

1 G. M. Starbird, *Growth of Associational Organization in the Baptist Church* MS. (University of Chicago, 1926), 42-45, 51-58. Rhode Island College was sponsored in 1774 by the Philadelphia, Charleston, S. C., and Warren, R. I., Associations.

2 B. H. Carroll, *Genesis of American Anti-Missionism* (Louisville, 1902), 32-34, 101. The Boston Female Missionary Society was the first Baptist agency to be organized, in 1800.

cessation of the Napoleonic wars overseas turned the attention of the American states to new tasks and opportunities west of the mountains. Their preoccupation with European affairs, which had been well nigh inescapable during the previous twenty-five years of turmoil, was at an end. Vast areas of western lands had been cleared of Indian occupants during the War of 1812, and these now attracted a swarm of immigrants into the territory of the Old Northwest. Everyone seemed convinced that the destiny of America would be carved out in the Great Valley.

Religious leaders were insisting that to abandon the West to the materialism, immorality, and unbelief of raw frontier society would mean the ultimate defeat of the cause of religion throughout the country, as well as in the mission fields. The older churches seemed to have no choice but to invade the new Western states. Interdenominational agencies, such as the American Tract, Bible, and Temperance Societies, and the American Sunday School Union were hastily organized for service in the region. Subsidiary state and local organizations of all sorts were sponsored.³ The obvious advantages which would accrue to the first group to become established in any locality led to a kind of feverish competition between denominations.

Although the Triennial Convention of the Baptists had been designed originally to promote foreign missions exclusively, it found itself inevitably drawn into the domestic program as well. Wrote Luther Rice in 1815:

"Not only do I conceive it proper that a mission be estab-

³ The American Tract Society maintained six distributing centers in Indiana in 1826. A state Temperance Society with numerous subordinate units was active in 1830. See Esarey, I, 325-26; Mode, 15-40, 111-17.

lished in the West, on account of the importance of this region in itself, but indispensably necessary to satisfy the wishes, and expectations of pious people in all parts of the United States."⁴

Two exploring agents, John M. Peck and James E. Welch, were accordingly sent into the Ohio Valley in 1817, and Rice himself made several visits to the region. A monthly paper known as *The Latter Day Luminary* was started in Philadelphia in 1818 by the Mission Board, with the object of spreading intelligence in regard to both foreign and domestic missions among the western and southern Baptists.⁵ The Board also undertook, in 1818, the support of Rev. Isaac McCoy in the promotion of religious and educational work among the Indians of Indiana. Peck and Welch eventually took up their residence at St. Louis, dividing their efforts between the whites and the Indian natives in the vicinity.

In their first contacts these missionaries were well received.⁶ Before long, however, difficulties began to develop in connection with the western mission. The need for a more extensive religious program among the frontier whites was so obvious that both Peck and Welch became much dissatisfied with the policy of the Board in stressing work among the Indians to the exclusion of the larger task.⁷ When Peck pressed upon the

4 *Baptist Home Missions in North America*, (1883) 295-296. A Presbyterian exploring agent was in Indiana at the time. See Hansford A. Edson, *Contributions to the Early History of the Presbyterian Church in Indiana*. (Cincinnati, 1898).

5 *The Latter Day Luminary*, vol. I, No. 1. (Philadelphia, 1818).

6 Wrote Welch from Lexington, Ky., in October, 1817, after attending the sessions of four Kentucky Associations: "The liberality of this respectable body . . . together with the kind reception of friends, more than rewarded for every privation and suffering." Rice was equally well received in Tennessee, and Peck in Illinois. *Ibid.*, I, 33-34.

7 After a year's labor among the Indians, they reported their work to have been entirely ineffectual because of un-

Mission Board in 1820 the necessity of an extended program, including education, itinerant preaching, as well as the Indian missionary work, the Convention abruptly abandoned the entire enterprise. The reasons given for this action were that the necessary funds were lacking, and that they supposed that the immigration of preachers to the West would be sufficient to supply the religious needs of the pioneers. A major consideration, however, was the increasing opposition to missions from Western sources. Welch returned to the East to work for the Sunday School Union, and Peck eventually found support, in 1822, from the Massachusetts Missionary Society.⁸

It was not until a full decade later that an effective program of domestic missions among the Western Baptists was undertaken. In the meantime, solicitation for funds by the Triennial Convention was continued throughout Western churches, and every Baptist Association was urged to enter upon correspondence with that body. Since there was nothing in the program which promised any material benefits for the Western churches, and much which operated to arouse their suspicions and jealousy, the response was meager and uncertain.⁹ John M. Peck visited Indiana on a number of occasions during the early twenties under the auspices of the American Bible Union and the Massachusetts Missionary Society. On two oc-

certain land tenure, and their inability to settle among the natives. *Ibid.*, I, 89-90, 502-503; II, 26-27.

8 Charles L. White, *A Century of Faith* (Philadelphia, 1932), 31-33. For various reasons, partly because of family illness, Peck refused to follow the orders of the Board to join McCoy's Indian mission at Ft. Wayne in 1820. Peck's first salary in 1822 was \$5.00 a week.

9 O. K. de Blois and L. C. Barnes, *John Mason Peck and One Hundred Years of Home Missions, 1817-1917*. (New York, 1917), 43-47. The authors here fail to appreciate the grounds of the opposition. See W. S. Stewart, *Early Baptist Missionaries and Pioneers* (Philadelphia, 1925), 243-244.

casions he vigorously championed his cause in debates with one Daniel Parker, an uncompromising foe of the missionary system. On the whole, Peck's contacts in Indiana were too scattering to produce any permanent and far-reaching results. The absence of continuous leadership which might have been afforded by such a man as Peck, was a serious handicap to the missionary cause. Not until the arrival of the first appointees of the Baptist Home Mission Society in 1833 did the state enjoy any effective outside aid.¹⁰

One of the factors which served to bring the Baptist missionary program under a cloud of suspicion was the miscarriage of three important enterprises which were begun by Rice in Washington, D. C. in the early twenties. The most ambitious of these schemes was the founding of Columbian College in 1822. It became hopelessly involved financially within a few years, and, in 1826, the remaining assets were taken over by the Massachusetts Missionary Society in connection with the founding of Newton Theological Institute. A journal known as the *Columbian Star* also had to be abandoned in the same year. The third undertaking, that of a Tract Society organized in 1824, was equally unsuccessful, its headquarters being moved to Philadelphia in 1826.¹¹

It was to find funds for these projects that the western mission had been discontinued in 1820, and their unfor-

10 Peck's influence in Illinois in the causes of temperance, anti-slavery, education, journalism, and missionary work in general was very great. In the columns of the *American Baptist Magazine*, organ of the Massachusetts Society, he repeatedly emphasized the fact that more alert denominations were gaining a marked advantage over the Baptists because of the lack of any adequate missionary program. He was a principal promoter of the Home Missions Society, organized in 1832. *American Baptist Magazine* X, 18; Babcock, 108-111, 162-173; de Blois and Barnes, 32-56, 65, 77-82.

11 Newman, 384-401, 426-428.

fortunate collapse made more difficult than ever the defense of the benevolent enterprise to the Baptists of the Ohio Valley. There was no group whose task it was to refute the charges of opponents that the affair was a dishonest, contemptible, money-making scheme. The allegations gained credence with repetition. In many Baptist circles the missionary agents were commonly referred to as "blood-sucking leeches." The plan of basing representation upon the size of the contributions was denounced as a method by which the wealthy and educated Yankees of New England were attempting to dominate the ecclesiastical missionary establishment which they were trying to foist upon the denomination.

Other popular religious bodies in the West such as the Methodists and Presbyterians shared the resentment expressed in Baptist circles with respect to the pretensions of the young missionaries coming out from New England to Christianize the heathen in the West. Peter Cartwright's autobiography has some sharp words to say about their smattering of Calvinistic theology, their supplies of manuscript sermons, as well as their wailings sent back to New England concerning the "moral wastes . . . of the West."¹² The Presbyterians likewise did not entirely escape the anti-missionary spirit. But in the case of the Methodists, the episcopal authority and circuit-rider system were fairly well established before Bishop Asbury's death in 1816. Some Free Methodists and "Republican" Methodists broke away from

¹² *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher*, (Cincinnati, 1856), 358-360. The author suggests that New England "might keep their home-manufactured clergy at home, or give them some honorable employ better suited to their genius than that of reading old musty and worm-eaten sermons . . . The self-importance and self-complacence of these little fellows! If they would tarry in Jericho till their beards were grown out," and more in the same vein.

the prevailing organizational practices, but the missionary issue did not constitute a seriously disturbing element. The Presbyterians had their antecedents more largely in New England, and therefore did not share the educational and sectional prejudices of Baptists and Methodists to the same degree. The general development of their representative system of church government was not affected materially by differences over missionary policies.¹³

Contributing Social and Political Factors.

Opposition to missions was not inherent in either Baptist tradition or theology. There was little Eastern hostility toward the enterprise, and indeed, there were at first minority groups among the Baptists of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois who were enthusiastic over the enterprise. A number of Baptist bodies in Indiana voted to purchase copies of the Minutes of the first two sessions of the Triennial Convention, and a few of them explicitly approved the cause.¹⁴ The following statement contained in a letter to the Laughery Association in 1818 reflected this approving attitude:

13 Halford E. Luccock and Paul Hutchinson, *The Story of Methodism* (New York, 1926), 244-251; Sweet, 64-67; Spencer, I, 556-561. William Pratt's *Memoirs* (p. 20) reveal that his missionary efforts were more generously received in Indiana Methodist circles in 1839 than they were among his Baptist brethren. The Cumberland Presbyterians in Kentucky were a kind of democratic offshoot, dating from the early nineteenth century, in protest against a professional, educated ministry.

14 Stott, 44; Sharon, Mt. Pleasant, New Washington CM, and Silver Creek AM, 1817-22. The leadership of James and Royce McCoy in Silver Creek Association and Lost River Association was strongly in favor of the new movement. Men like Henry Bradley of Indianapolis, Lewis Morgan and Samuel Harding of Shelby and Johnson Counties respectively, Thomas Hill, Jr., of Coffee Creek Association, and Jesse Holman of Aurora quickly perceived the importance of the enterprise.

"The times present a day of the Lord's power . . . Bible and Missionary societies have extended the written and preached gospel to every quarter of the Globe, with a zeal and sweep unexampled in any age of the World since the days of the Apostles . . . Oh may its beams enlighten the darkest recesses of Indiana.¹⁵

An especially strong enthusiasm for the missionary cause was to be found in the community of the Maria Creek church near Vincennes, Indiana, of which Isaac McCoy was pastor. It came about in 1818 as a result of McCoy's decision to devote his life to a mission among the Indians of the Wabash valley. The spirit was shared by two daughter churches of Maria Creek. The development is told very simply in a letter from McCoy to the Missionary Board in May, 1818:

"In no part of the field of labours have I had more reason to lament the want of religious sensation, than that in which my family resides, until a few days past. Three sermons which I have lately preached, seem to have been attended with a power which I am sure does not belong to me. . . . Scarcely a countenance is seen in time of preaching which does not express deep affection of mind."¹⁶

The revival which followed witnessed eighty-four accessions to the three churches within a period of six months, and it carried over into the following year. McCoy's churches never deserted the cause. They were the nucleus of the Union Association, organized in 1824, which was for many years the only missionary body in the entire southwestern quarter of the state.¹⁷ But there

¹⁵ *Holman Correspondence*, 1818.

¹⁶ *The Latter Day Luminary* I, 44, 183. (Jan. 14, May 7, 1818).

¹⁷ William Polke, a friend of McCoy, wrote as follows concerning the revival on August 10, 1819: "This is the greatest revival that ever has been experienced in this part of the country; it has been affected without a noise or a confusion and with a solemnity becoming the religion of Jesus." *Ibid.*, I, 510-512, from Bruceville.

were few Isaac McCoy's, and the quickening which appeared here as a result of a missionary purpose was an isolated case. Maria Creek church differed not at all in standards from the other Regular Baptist churches. McCoy was a thoroughgoing Calvinist in his theology, as the constitutions of the churches which he organized reveal. He was simply moved to action by the suffering and miserable friendlessness of the Indians, and could not continue in his Christian profession without making some effort to relieve their distress.

But McCoy found little sympathy among his fellow Baptists. To most of the pioneers, the Indians were creatures to be hated, feared, and despised. To train them as agriculturalists and to make of them permanent citizens was to impose a barrier across the path of the land-hungry whites. Any program of reform, furthermore, went counter to the interests of the makers and sellers of the vast quantities of whiskey distributed among the Indians, a traffic which provided a considerable source of revenue to many pioneer families. The very inability of the majority of frontier Baptists to respond to the ethical challenge of McCoy on the question of friendly regard for the Indians operated to intensify their hostility to the missionary cause and to make them seek other arguments against it.¹⁸

It is more than a coincidence that the rise of hostility to the missionary system in the early twenties was contemporaneous with the terrific economic depression which prevailed throughout the West following the panic of 1819. With trade stagnant and prices ruinously low

¹⁸ *American Baptist Magazine*, VII, 238-240, letter from McCoy, Feb. 29, 1828. McCoy was never able to understand the calloused disregard of the right of the natives by the whites who were daily trespassing upon Indian land and witnessing their dire sufferings. This enterprise will be fully treated in chapter IV.

(wheat at 25c a bushel and whiskey at 15c a gallon) the resulting disaffection made people ready to accept almost any leadership which would point to a plausible object of attack. This situation was responsible in large measure for the rapid development of the party of Andrew Jackson, for it was he who pointed to the Eastern aristocracy and the so-called "money-power" as the authors of the ills of the West.¹⁹ Without the aid of any formal political organization, Jackson received a comfortable plurality of the popular vote in Indiana in the election of 1824. His support came from the humbler section which also provided the greater part of the Baptist constituency. The identity of the two groups may be seen in such persons as Daniel Parker, John Vawter, and Thomas Lincoln, all of whom were enthusiastic Jackson followers and opponents of missions. The Jacksonian movement swept like a tidal wave over the state following the election of the Yankee, J. Q. Adams, in 1825.²⁰

To a very marked degree the sectional jealousies of the Jacksonian movement were transferred to the anti-mission cause among the Baptists. In both cases the enemy movement had its origin in New England, and could be represented as an effort of the ambitious money-power of the East to betray the democratic liberties of the people.²¹ The ruling of the Triennial Convention limiting representation to groups who contributed \$100 or more to the cause was seized upon as proof that the affair was a nefarious plan to allow the unconverted

19 Samuel Rezneck, "The Depression of 1819-1822, a Social History," *American Historical Review*, 39, 28-47. (1933).

20 Esarey, I, 284-285, 338-340.

21 A correspondent from Ohio to the *Western Predestinarian Baptist*, June 1, 1843 asserted: "In my humble opinion, every individual who contributes to the missionary operations is ignorantly contributing to the downfall of the American Republic."

monied classes of the East to gain control of the Society. Suspicious opponents declared that they had "smelled a New England rat" in the enterprise from the very first. The tactics employed by Luther Rice in raising money were denounced as "sophistry and Yankee art," being both shameless and indecent.²² The missionary promoters were accused not only of mulcting the pious for their own selfish advantage, but also of plotting to overthrow the democratic institutions of the nation.²³

A third factor contributory to the anti-mission movement among the Baptists was the apathetic attitude and low state of vitality prevailing in many churches.²⁴

From all quarters one finds complaints that vice, profanity, and Sabbath violation were raging unchecked. The following letter to the Laughery Association is typical of many received during this period:

"Our own situation . . . is truly deplorable gross darkness seems to cover the people & we . . . stumble at noonday as those that have no eyes."²⁵

From Charlestown, Indiana, came the following word in 1826:

"The State of Christianity, or rather the professors here are at a very low ebb. There is not the least encouraging

22 Alexander Campbell asserted in *The Christian Baptist*, (Feb. 2, 1824), referring to the benevolent program, that "money is the bond of union, the associating principle in all popular establishments, . . . the rock on which the popular churches are built."

23 Smith, 126-127; *The Christian Baptist*, I, 33-34. Campbell argued that if a church would distribute its own Bibles, "it will need no recording secretary, no president . . . It will send all this pageantry, this religious show, to the regions of pride and vanity whence it came."

24 Spencer, I, 547-67.

25 *Holman Correspondence*, Manchester Church letter. Similar ones are from Long Run, Briant's Creek, and Bear Creek churches, 1818-1826.

prospect amongst any denomination so far as my knowledge extends . . . If ever there was a time that called for the united prayer of Christians, the present is one."²⁶

Because most of the churches lacked the vitality necessary to undertake positive support of the cause of benevolences, their very inertia played into the hands of hostile reactionary influences. Doctrinal and ecclesiastical arguments against missions, when buttressed by social and political prejudices found few leaders capable of opposing them effectively. Unable to move forward, the denomination slipped backward into a morass of suspicion and strife.²⁷

A fourth social factor active in certain aspects of the anti-mission cause was the jealous spirit of the Western ministers themselves. To not a few of the local elders the Eastern missionaries seemed to be rivals suing for the affections of their congregations. Said an opponent to J. M. Peck on one occasion:

"We don't care anything about them missionaries that's gone amongst them heathen way off yonder We don't want them here in Illinois These missionaries will all be great, learned men, and the people will go to hear them preach, and we shall all be put down."²⁸

Another phase of the competition between the two groups is evident in the following quotation from a circular letter of the White River Association in 1844:

²⁶ *Ibid.*, M. Cole to J. L. Holman, April 14, 1826. A Silver Creek Association minute for 1813 complained of "coldness and leanness in religion, of barren and unfruitful minds."

²⁷ Newman, 438-442. Illinois Baptists were for a time even more hostile than those of Indiana; Ohio Baptists contributed only \$15.00 during the entire decade of the twenties to the work of the Convention.

²⁸ Babcock, 108-111.

"Brethren there is another matter that is detrimental to the feelings of your preacher. He has been laboring for you for years, perhaps, and you have paid little or no attention to him—but here comes along a preacher from a distance; perhaps an agent of some board, and your hearts, purses, and all are open to him, throwing in your five, ten or twenty dollars for himself or some society. . . ." ²⁹

It was quite easy for provincial prejudice to see in the book learning and the refined social habits of the Eastern missionaries a reflection upon the abilities and accomplishments of the local elders. They, therefore, stigmatized any program which proposed to prepare ministers by educational processes as an effort to transform "graceless and lazy young men into clerical parasites." To the unpaid pastors, the habit of the missionary agents in soliciting contributions upon every occasion was declared "disgustful to common decency," akin to the tactics of Tetzels or those of the money-changers in the Temple. ³⁰

Many preachers of ability who were not bothered by any sense of inferiority to the missionaries were nevertheless decidedly unfriendly to their program. An example may be found in the person of John Vawter, the eldest son of Jesse Vawter, resident of Vernon, a man of affairs, and an outstanding leader in both political and religious life. A visitor passing through Vernon in 1815, reported his surprise to find that his host at the Inn was also the local surveyor, the proprietor of the general store, and the preacher at the local church. He dubbed Vawter, in short, the "nabob of Vernon." At one time or another Vawter was a County Magistrate, sheriff, frontier ranger, U. S. Marshal, Colonel of the Jennings

²⁹ White River AM, 1844.

³⁰ Sweet, 67, 72-74.

County militia, a member of the General Assembly of the state, and the founder of Morgantown. It is easy to understand why a man of such varied abilities would resent the implication that the young missionaries fresh from New England colleges were capable of telling him and the church what they should do. The Vawter family as a whole were typical of a considerable group of the older leaders who were never sympathetic with the missionary program.³¹

A final reason advanced by opponents of the missionary program was the fear that the church would be robbed of its unique position by the usurpation of authority by the unscriptural missionary societies.³² They pointed out from the Scriptures that the missionary journey of Jonah was authorized by God himself, and that when Paul and Barnabas were commissioned by the early church, the action was not reviewed by the board of any society who passed upon their educational qualifications and voted them a salary.³³

This jealous regard for the sacred character of the church was very genuine. It constituted the principal grounds upon which Alexander Campbell rejected the missionary system. The same attitude is observable in the general opposition prevailing among the Baptist people toward the Masonic Order. Many churches excluded active Masons or forced them to accept qualified letters of dismissal, on the ground that "the Religion

31 Bicknell, 16, 23-24, 36, 40-42. The Vawters were not sticklers for strict regularity either in matters of doctrine or in church ordinances, however.

32 Wrote Alexander Campbell in the *Christian Baptist* I, no. 5, pp. 33-34: "The church is robbed of its character by every institution, merely human, that would ape its excellence and substitute itself in its place."

33 Sweet, 64-74, 567-578.

of Jesus Supercedes the Necessity of Such a Sosiety."³⁴
[sic]

Primitive Baptist Opposition to Missions.

The most virulent opponents of missionary innovations were found within the churches that came to be designated by the name Primitive Baptist. Two distinct movements in this connection can be identified. The first was located in east-central Indiana and was led by elder Wilson Thompson of the Whitewater Valley Association. Thompson's immediate followers came to be known as the "anti-means" Primitive Baptists. The second movement had its center in the lower valley of the Wabash river and was inspired by the personality of elder Daniel Parker of Illinois. Parker's followers were the "two-seed-in-the-spirit Predestinarian Baptists." The similarities between the two derive from an equally radical emphasis upon the doctrine of predestination and from a common social and religious background. Although they began simultaneously around 1820, they were nevertheless quite unconnected with each other.

Elder Wilson Thompson was a man of considerable ability as a speaker and singer, widely travelled throughout the western country from Ohio and Kentucky to Missouri. He left behind him an autobiography, a most interesting document, in which the genesis of his anti-missionary convictions is revealed. In the course of one of his journeys, in 1819, he visited Isaac McCoy's Indian mission north of Terre Haute and became interested in the enterprise. When McCoy decided to transfer his

³⁴ The Sharon church was particularly active in the anti-Masonic program in 1819 and 1820, while the Vernon, Columbus, and First Prairie Creek churches were also affected by the question. For its origin in Kentucky, see Spencer, I, 92, 121, 129, 155, 160, 260.

efforts to Fort Wayne in the following year, he invited Thompson to join him. The invitation was an exceedingly disturbing one, for there seemed to be no sufficient reason to justify a refusal to accept. Friends of Thompson cited the great need of his ministerial services among the white settlements and the privations that would attend living among the Indians, but to no avail. Thompson completed all preparations to join McCoy and bade farewell to the several churches that he was serving.

The turning point came while Thompson was riding home from his last preaching appointment. It suddenly occurred to him that, after all, there was no incontestable evidence that this was God's time or His method for converting the heathen. Says he in his autobiography: "I saw myself on the verge of a precipice, and, like a blind man, was about to leap, I knew not whither." He immediately abandoned his purpose of joining McCoy.³⁵

Thompson's subsequent efforts to find scriptural authorization for his decision were not in vain. He convinced himself that the great commission limited all preaching to "the Gospel" narrowly defined, and this to God's elect creatures only. On neither of these grounds, he decided, did the work of McCoy or other missionaries qualify. He eventually became convinced that all who dared overstep these narrow limits were rebels against God and self-proven imposters. For the monied mission boards to attempt to usurp God's own directional authority as illustrated in the sending of Peter to Cornelius or in the conversion of Paul branded them immediately as the agents of the anti-Christ. Where, asked Thompson, could the missionary promoters point to one well-organ-

³⁵ *Autobiography of Elder Wilson Thompson* (Greenfield, 1857; Cincinnati, 1867), 273-279. On the occasion of Thompson's visit to McCoy's mission he baptized one Corbly Martin, who later served as McCoy's assistant.

ized Gospel church of the type that Paul had founded? When had they collected funds to relieve the poor at home as had Paul? These modern agents were ready to "beg the last cent they can get from the poorest widow, or the hired orphan girl." "By this exercise of mind," he concluded, "my feet were saved from the snare, and my course of ministry settled for life."³⁶

Beginning thus as a rationalization of Thompson's personal unwillingness to respond to McCoy's invitation, the doctrine of predestination developed into a formidable argument against the entire missionary system. If God was really sovereign, the realization of his purposes could not be dependent upon the aid of the puny efforts of man. The people whom God had purposed to save would, therefore, be converted entirely apart from the employment of human means. Any retreat from hyper-Calvinistic principles was denounced as a measurable surrender to atheism, no matter by whom taken.

As Thompson's autobiography abundantly demonstrates, his later career was absorbed by continuous bickering and controversy with those who refused to follow his interpretation in the matter.³⁷ Since he was fighting anti-Christ, he was not particular as to the means employed. Political partizanship was openly brought into the controversy; Judson's work was pilloried as a disguised plot of Jesuitical character; any insistence upon the employment of human instrumentalities for the salvation of men was denounced as a flagrant and insulting denial of the sovereignty of God. The counter-attack was in much the same spirit, but it came not from the defenders of the missionary system, but rather from a considerable number of liberal-minded Baptists who re-

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 279-287.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 310-313; Mode 161-162.

refused to accept Thompson's standard of creedal orthodoxy.³⁸ The neighboring Flat Rock Association, for example, was split three ways by the agitation. In 1829, when the group as a whole refused to commit itself in favor of the predestinarian issue, the "anti-means" churches withdrew to form the Conn's Creek Association, charging that the majority were tainted with Arminian and Campbellite views. The followers of Campbell left the Flat Rock fellowship during the succeeding two years. Thompson's own Whitewater Valley Association eventually split over the anti-means question in 1845. The tenseness of the situation can be judged from the exhortation appearing repeatedly in the Flat Rock minutes that the churches send as delegates only "sober, holy, and upright members," and warning that "a little malice, a little hypocrisy, a little hard dealing, a little want of . . . brotherly love, may throw a whole church or a whole Association into confusion." It was almost a score of years after the original split that the churches remaining in the Flat Rock Association took an official stand in favor of missionary benevolences.³⁹

Similar influences can be found to a less degree in the Indianapolis Association. When the Indianapolis church and Association officially repealed the predestinarian article of their creeds in 1827 and 1828 respectively, nine churches withdrew from their fellowship. Even among those who remained the feeling against all benevolences was so strong that the Association refused, as late as

38 Carroll, 97-107; Smith, 126-129. Liberal critics denounced the anti-means doctrine as the "very essence of sin; . . . full of excuses for its guilty indolence."

39 Flat Rock AM, 1828-1833. Mount Moriah, Mount Gilead, Nineveh, and Lewis Creek churches all opposed missions in the early thirties. Lewis Morgan's Brandywine church, at which the General Association of the state was organized in 1833, was almost alone in its pro-missionary declaration. See Brandywine (Fairland) CM, July, 1833.

1837, to take a moderate stand on temperance. They declined to undertake a local missionary project in 1839, and also refused to affiliate with the General Association of the state in 1842.⁴⁰

Daniel Parker was an even more striking figure than Thompson. He left Kentucky in 1817, and took up his residence in south-eastern Illinois. Diminutive in person, uncouth, and decidedly unprepossessing in appearance, he was nevertheless a powerful partisan leader. He seemed to thrive on controversy. He was both clever and uncompromising in debate, and knew how to play upon every prejudice of his hearers.⁴¹ Parker had been one of the very few Baptist leaders who had opposed Luther Rice when the latter had visited Kentucky in 1815. It was not until a decade thereafter, however, that he formulated his peculiar theological justification of his hatred of missions. The following not unsympathetic description of him comes from one of his opponents, John M. Peck:

“Daniel Parker exerted himself to the utmost to induce churches within his range to declare non-fellowship with all baptists who united with any missionary or other benevolent, (or, as he called them, new-fangled) societies. He possessed a mind of singular and original cast . . . Repeatedly have we heard him when his mind seemed to rise above its own powers, and he would discourse for a few moments . . . with such brilliancy of thought and force and correctness of language, as would astonish men of education and talents. Then, again, it would seem

⁴⁰ Indianapolis CM, 1827-32; Indianapolis AM, 1827-29, 1837-42.

⁴¹ Spencer, I, 575-578; Carroll, 108-123. Born in Virginia, Parker grew up in Georgia, and was ordained in Tennessee in 1806. He had previously engaged in bitter controversy with the “New Lights” and Methodists in Kentucky and Tennessee.

as though he was perfectly bewildered in a mist of abstruse subtleties."⁴²

The original basis of Parker's objection to the missionary program was stated in a pamphlet published in 1820. The Baptist Board, he charged, was usurping the authority of Christ and openly violating the Scriptures in calling, training, and undertaking to direct the work of God's ministers. The attempt to supplant by human instrumentalities the direct agency of God in begetting his own children Parker sarcastically likened to an outsider aiding a neighbor family to secure a much-desired heir. The whole enterprise was, he contended, a source of downright moral evil. He attacked Isaac McCoy on the ground that it was no concern of religion that the Indians be educated and colonized.

Parker's famous doctrine of "two-seeds-in-the-spirit" formulated in the middle twenties, was a crude physiological explanation of election and the existence of evil. God's own creatures, he argued, could never suffer eternal misery. But the devil's seed had also become implanted in the race at the time of the fall of man, so that a portion of mankind were, literally speaking, children of the devil. God's children came from God's seed, their salvation being wholly and exclusively dependent upon the presence of the good seed in their spirits. The minister's function, Parker concluded, was merely to "comfort Zion . . . and contend for the faith."⁴³ Beyond all doubt

42 David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York, 1848), 864-865. The following is taken from the Minutes of the Parker's Wabash Association in 1830: "We warn you against the corrupting errors of Mr. John Peck . . . He is to be considered as a dangerous foe."

43 *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Chronicle*, (1842) 197; Carroll, 88-90, 108-123, 193; Spencer, I, 575-578. Parker began a short-lived paper, the *Christian Advocate*, in 1829,

Parker's own abilities lay in this latter field of contention.

Parker's influence in southwestern Indiana during the twenties was very great. His own Wabash District Association declared non-fellowship with the Baptist Board of Missions in 1819. It excluded the Maria Creek church from its membership at the annual meeting in 1822 because of the missionary sympathies of that body. Peck attempted to defend the church on this occasion. Immediately thereafter Parker began to visit all of the neighboring Associations in Indiana in an effort to persuade them to refuse to correspond with missionary bodies and to accept his two-seed doctrine. Salem Association in the extreme southwestern corner was under his influence for many years after its organization in 1822.

Parker repeatedly visited the Little Pigeon Association to which Tom Lincoln's church belonged, and enjoyed a very enthusiastic following there for several years, centering especially in Lincoln's church. An appreciation of the obscurantist turmoil which this and other aspects of provincial prejudice aroused within the Association during Abe's young manhood in Indiana goes far to explain why the intelligent lad never developed any interest in the family church. Abe was living in a larger world of ideas, and was turning Whig politically. Although the Little Pigeon Association repudiated Parker's doctrines in 1828, it remained down to 1840 an anti-missionary body.⁴⁴

in which he deliberately sought to arouse the prejudices of the more ignorant classes against an educated ministry. He was influential enough politically to secure election to the Illinois State Senate from 1822 to 1826.

44 Little Pigeon AM, 1823-1840. Elder Charles Harper of the Little Pigeon Church was the leader of Parker's faction. This Association severed correspondence with the Wabash Association largely to rid itself of Parker's meddlesome interfer-

Parker was also more or less influential in securing the rejection of the missionary system by the Blue River and the Lost River Associations. Three other new Associations in the west-central portion of the state adopted Parker's position at the time of organization: Eel River Association (1824), Danville Association (1827), and Sugar Creek Association (1832).⁴⁵ The disturbing influence of this man was finally removed when he migrated to the Mexican state of Texas in 1833.⁴⁶

Although the influence of Parker's personality was great, the vogue of his peculiar doctrines has probably been somewhat over-emphasized by students of Baptist history. Many of the Primitive Baptist groups repudiated "two-seedism" as such during the twenties. His position was more or less accurately preserved by a group who took the name Old School Predestinarian Baptists. They maintained a corresponding relationship with similar groups scattered over a number of the Western and Southern states. A magazine known as the *Western Predestinarian Baptist* was started in 1842, edited by R. M. Newport of Paris, Illinois, and H. T. Craig, of Morgantown, Indiana. The latter was a leader of the Parkerite Bethlehem Association. The journal apparently enjoyed greater support within Indiana than from any

ence. When it finally voted in 1840 to make the acceptance of missionary principles no bar to fellowship, a Primitive group broke away, taking the name of Little Zion Association. See J. F. Cady "The Religious Environment of Lincoln's Boyhood," *Indiana Magazine of History*, (March, 1941).

45 Stott, 129-133; Union AM, 1874, 19-22. Associations which later took a similar stand included Bethlehem Association of Johnson county (1838-1920), Enon Association west of Indianapolis (1842-1881), Paint Creek Association still further westward (1844-1895), and Vermillion Association in the county of the same name. All church work declined during the period of controversy, the entire Lost River Association averaging only fourteen baptisms per year from 1828 to 1832.

46 Smith, 120-130. From 1829 to 1831, Parker edited the *Christian Advocate*.

other state, there being no less than fifty-six designated subscription agents within its bounds in 1843. During its short life-time the paper became involved in an argument with a New York periodical, the *Signs of the Times*, over Parker's "two-seed" doctrine. Parker himself contributed a number of letters from Texas, and another authority on the subject wrote from Louisiana. The futility of the discussion was finally demonstrated in the fact that it became focused on the unsolvable question of the origin of the devil, much to the disgust of a number of the subscribers to the paper.⁴⁷

In an effort to rationalize their declining fortunes, the Old School Baptists became very much interested in the Millerite adventist movement in the early forties. Their own misfortunes were interpreted as portents of the approaching end of the age. The following excerpts will illustrate:

"God will not suffer his church to amalgamate with the daughters of Babylon, but will separate the precious from the vile. When that is done, . . . there will be no more traffic in relics, no more selling indulgences, no more trading in Church membership nor Church offices, no more begging and taxing to raise money to support their ungodly craft."⁴⁸

"Arminianism of every species is making rapid strides, but the most dangerous errors that assail us are Campbellism and the New School Baptists. It seems to us as if the two-horned beast spoken of in Revelations, is rapidly making the image to the ten-horned beast, spoken of in

47 *The Western Predestinarian Baptist*, February, 1842 to December, 1843. Jonathan Hougham and Moses Sellers were frequent Indiana contributors. Various news items from Monroe, Greene, Parke, Johnson, and Tippecanoe counties indicated that the Primitives were rapidly losing ground in almost every quarter.

48 *Ibid.*, June 15, 1842. Jonathan Hougham, from Parke County.

the same chapter. Anti-christ is certainly at this time making rapid progress in the amalgamation of Church and State, therefore it behooves all who draw the bow to shoot at Babylon and spare no arrows."⁴⁹

"Thank God there is still a very small remnant according to the Election of grace that have not bowed the knee to Baal."⁵⁰

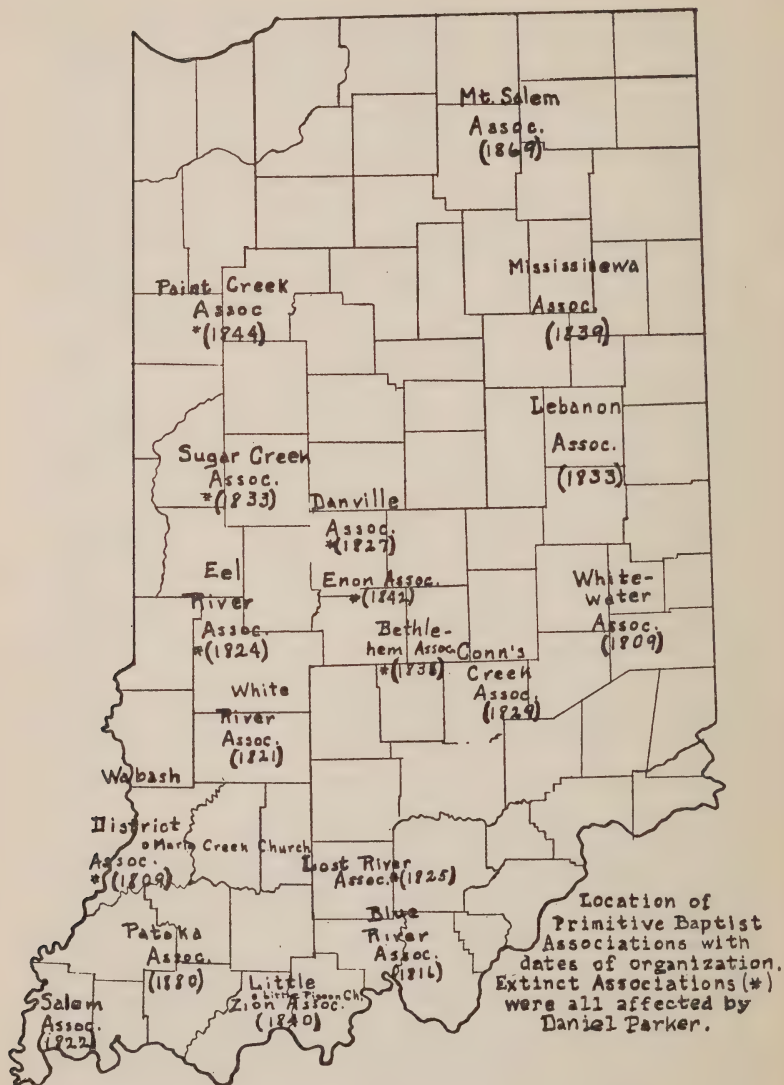
The greater number of the Primitive Baptist churches of Indiana have descended from organizations which at one time or another were under the influence of Thompson or Parker. Traces of "two-seedism" and the "anti-means" doctrine can still be found among them, although they are by no means generally held. Their present cohesion seems to be based upon uniformity of practice rather than of doctrine. They have maintained unbendingly, for the most part, their opposition to all auxiliary societies for the promotion of temperance, missions, and an educated professional ministry. They are also opposed to Sunday Schools and to the use of instrumental music in the church. Pastors receive no regular salaries, but congregations do contribute to their needs, as a rule. Meetings are still held once a month on Saturday and Sunday. These standards were somewhat shaken by a so-called progressive movement which began around 1916.⁵¹

The later history of the Primitive Baptists has been

49 *Ibid.*, from Wabash District AM, 1841.

50 *Ibid.*, April 15, 1843, from L. Farman at Lafayette.

51 Edgar Ray West, *The Primitive Baptists in Indiana*, MS. Another important source of Primitive Baptist influence in the southern part of the state, has been from Kentucky Baptist churches. Quotations from early Kentucky sources can easily be found which date the calamities of the church from the apostasy of the Arminian and missionary groups. They denounced the benevolent program as a "monstrous system of iniquity," akin to witchcraft and attempting the enslavement of heathen converts, to be identified with the second beast of Revelation. (Copied from the Otter Creek Association Circular Letter by White River Association, 1844).



one of almost uninterrupted decline. Some seven or eight of their Associations in Indiana have become extinct or practically so. About a dozen of them still carry on, but they number only three to five churches each, with from 100 to 250 total membership per Association. The Blue River Association is the only marked exception to this rule, its twelve churches containing about 800 members.⁵² The location of the various Primitive Associations with the dates of organization is indicated on the accompanying map. In a general way, those in the western half of the state were Parkerite in origin, and those in the eastern half from Conn's Creek to Mt. Salem were derived from Thompson's movement.

If personal sacrifice and dogged loyalty to a lost cause constituted ends in themselves, the history of this group would be a glorious one. It is less impressive, however, when one contemplates how much valuable moral and physical energy has been expended by them in the impossible effort to defend a static institutional program as if it were something divinely ordained.

Regular Baptist Opposition to Missions; White River Association

A great many Baptists whose opposition to the missionary program was not as thoroughgoing as that of the radical predestinarian leaders already mentioned, nevertheless refused for several decades to accord any positive support to it. Most of the leaders regarded the

⁵² *Ibid.* The following Associations no longer hold meetings: Wabash District Association (confined to Illinois), Lost River (since 1874), Danville-Enon (since 1881), Paint Creek (since 1895), Sugar Creek (since 1912, split by Universalism), Bethlehem (since 1920), Eel River (since 1932), Conn's Creek (since 1939). "Two-seedism" survived longest in the Eel River, Sugar Creek and Bethlehem Associations.

issue as being troublesome and inopportune. As responsible churchmen, they were primarily concerned in preventing the development of discord and division over the question. They were inclined, therefore, to adopt a cautious attitude, frowning upon both the antagonist and the radical protagonist of the missionary cause.⁵³ Many such bodies, Coffee Creek and Flat Rock Associations for example, eventually endorsed the missionary cause.

The history of the White River Association from the twenties to the fifties well illustrates the difficulties in which many Regular Baptist bodies found themselves. Organized in 1821 by churches formerly affiliated with the conservative Blue River Association, the White River churches soon became involved in the controversy attending Daniel Parker's attack upon the missionary program.⁵⁴ At the Associational meeting in 1825, the question at issue was openly debated by Daniel Parker and John M. Peck. On the strength of Peck's apparent victory in this debate, correspondence with the Wabash District Association was discontinued. The alleged ground was that the Maria Creek church had been excluded by the Wabash body for inadequate cause three

53 From the year 1826 onward, even the stronger Associations expressed concern over the division, confusion, and lack of harmony prevailing, and stressed the importance of humility and brotherly love among the brethren. See letters from Silver Creek, Coffee Creek, and Flat Rock Associations, *Holman Correspondence*. The Little Mount Church would have nothing to do with Sunday Schools and Temperance Societies from 1833 to 1846. It long debated Home Missions, 1846-47.

54 White River AM, 1821, 1823, 1824. Its rules and creed were copied verbatim from those of the parent Association. It definitely condemned all "schemes of general communion." The Circular Letter for 1824 warned that "when professors get careless . . . back-biting and devouring each other, the Church declines."

years before. For a number of years thereafter, the Association was apparently quite friendly to the missionary cause, refusing on various occasions to grant the requests of a few member churches that they reject the program.⁵⁵ They did nothing, however, to give effective expression to their missionary spirit.

Toward the end of the twenties, a new problem arose as a result of the agitation of Alexander Campbell and his followers against the use of creeds. Such ideas found particularly hearty acceptance among those who disliked the predestinarian emphasis of conservative Regular Baptists. The issue was a difficult one. The Association at first denied the validity of all baptism administered by the "Christian body," and expressed its impatience of the "whims of some . . . amongst us" who refused to say what they believed of Jesus. Next they explicitly rejected the doctrines of Campbell in 1830, setting forth five fundamental points of doctrine which all affiliated churches must accept. These were (1) total moral depravity, (2) effectual calling, (3) predestination, (4) perseverance of the saints, and (5) believer's baptism by immersion. Preachers who did not hold these doctrines were, according to the resolution, not to be received by the churches.⁵⁶ Several of the churches broke off immediately from the Association, and within a few years the controversy reached a fevered pitch. The distraught state of affairs is indicated by the following assertion in the Minutes of 1832:

55 *Ibid.*, 1825-1830. Such liberal leaders as Leroy Mayfield, William Polke, and James Royce, and John McCoy, brothers of Isaac, were prominent in its councils. It also corresponded with the Union Association and the Indianapolis Association during these years.

56 *Ibid.*, 1830. The statement affirmed that "those who teach false doctrines must be influenced by an evil spirit."

"Backbiting and slandering one another ought carefully to be avoided. We are fearful that this practice is prevailing among us to a considerable extent."

The cause was attributed directly to the influence of the teachings of Campbell.⁵⁷

A crisis came at the Associational meeting in 1833. In spite of the presence of two newly-arrived missionaries to Indiana at this session, Reuben Coffey and M. Fairfield, the conservatives could be persuaded to make no concessions whatever. It was voted that member churches should be required to indicate explicit acceptance of the creed of the Association annually in their letters. The result was a disastrous split, eight more churches leaving the group. The work declined, and baptisms dropped from an average of thirty annually over a period of years to a mere four in 1836. With the aid of the Danville and Eel River Associations, the conservative party, now in complete control, proceeded to patch up their differences with the Wabash District Association. Their earlier condemnation of Parker's peculiar doctrine gave way to grudging acceptance. Their action of 1825 condemning the exclusion of the Maria Creek church was rescinded, alleging that they had been led into this error "by designing individuals who were present and took the lead in business." (i. e. John M. Peck)⁵⁸

The Association naturally encountered many dif-

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1830-1833. Continued the resolution: "His [Campbell's] opposition to creeds and to confessions of faith has a tendency to undermine the foundations of the Regular Baptist church, to destroy everything like unity of sentiment, and to sow discord and dissension among brethren."

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1833-1836. Parkerism had been declared in 1825 to be "another bait of the Devil;" now liberal opponents were denounced as Arians and Unitarians. Even Universalists and Roman Catholics, they charged, would assert their belief in the Scriptures, as Campbell wished all to do.

ficulties in their efforts to "shun the rocks and cliffs of eternal justification on the one hand and the bogs and quick-sands of Arminianism on the other." Further trouble came in the next decade. Acting upon a resolution of 1840 requiring the unanimous vote of the churches on the question of correspondence with outside Associations, they proceeded to sever their relations with four Parkerite bodies, Danville, Eel River, Blue River, and Wabash District Associations. Not until five years later did they resume correspondence with any outside group. Meanwhile several of their own churches were excluded on such grounds as "alien" immersion. A rabid propaganda of misrepresentation and ridicule was directed against the missionary program all the while.⁵⁹

The failure of the White River churches to react generously toward the larger fellowship seems to have dried up the springs of their liberality toward their own ministers. Morale gave way and internal friction increased. The following pertinent sentences are from the minutes of 1844 and 1847:

"Surely the Lord has made it your duty to communicate your carnal things to him that sows unto you spiritual things. . . . Those preachers whom the Lord calls . . . are willing to trust God in his providence, and his grace, or the church."

"The poor minister who has stemmed the current of opposition, brooked the inclemency of the weather, and left perhaps a weeping wife and distressed children behind him, comes to your meeting house, finds a few at a late

59 *Ibid.*, 1840-1844. The minute of 1844 reproduced a Circular Letter of the Fishing Creek Association of Kentucky which ridiculed the doll and pin-cushion societies of the young student missionaries, and argued that the entire enterprise was a dishonest money-making scheme. Correspondence with Enon, Danville, and Little Zion Associations was reopened in 1845, and relations with the Whitewater Association were opened for one year only in 1853.

hour, scattered upon the seats, . . . talking about their worldly concerns, or some passing political whim. . . . Thus the preacher and people become discouraged, and hence great coldness and declension takes place among the churches."

A final commentary on their situation comes from the minutes of 1859:

"We know of no practice more wicked, cowardly, and mean than for one man to speak evil of another behind his back. . . . From men of grace, we look for something different If the discipline of the church were extended to retraction or back-biting, as it is to drunkenness and murder, who would continue in the church?"⁶⁰

The tremendous tenacity with which religious convictions may be maintained is demonstrated by the fact that this same Association, in spite of its comparatively lifeless condition, has maintained its existence uninterruptedly. It was reduced in 1934 to five churches and around 250 members.⁶¹ Within this same area of the state, there sprang up during the period of controversy three missionary Associations, completely overshadowing the Primitive Baptists.⁶² The Disciples communion also developed a strong constituency within the same region.

It is obvious that social currents of large dimensions were operating beneath the surface agitation of the radical opponents of missions. The inertia of a provincial society and their prejudice against a professional edu-

60 *Ibid.*, 1838-1856. Discouragement gave way to bitterness in the fifties. Tirades appear in the minutes in which they condemn in the same sentence the scholar, philosopher, and moralist along with the libertine, blasphemer, and malefactor. They could take satisfaction only in the fact that "Gospel truth has always been a minority."

61 West, *op. cit.*

62 White Lick Association (1835), Bloomington Association, later called Bedford, (1842), and Friendship Association (1856) were the three.

cated clergy, especially when drawn from New England, were sufficient to account for much of the feeling. To this can be added the jealousy of the unpaid ministers of the frontier against the subsidized activities of the missionary promoters. There can be no doubt, furthermore, that the concern lest hierarchial control should compromise the democratic character of the Baptist communion was quite genuine. Theological differences latent in the situation were brought into clear definition by the ensuing discussion, fanning partisanship and controversy between local disputants nearly all of whom were equally opposed to the missionary program. The latter functioned as a kind of catalytic agent. With the liberal secessionary accompaniments of this dismal story we have now to deal.

CHAPTER III

LIBERAL SECESSIONARY MOVEMENTS

When the earliest Baptist opponents of missionary activity elected to justify their attitude by an extreme emphasis upon the doctrine of predestination, it was inevitable that traditional Separate Baptist hostility to the binding character of creedal formulations should assert itself. The two most important expressions of liberal divergence within Indiana were led by Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Disciples communion, and by Benoni Stinson, the leader of the General Baptist churches in the southwestern corner of the state.

The Bearing of the Disciples Movement Upon the Missionary Question

Alexander Campbell came into general prominence among the Baptists of Indiana as an advocate of traditional Separate Baptist principles and as an uncompromising opponent of missionary benevolences. His original agitation against the practice of infant baptism and the doctrine of predestination was well under way before the anti-missionary question arose, but his hearing on such questions was confined largely to the upper reaches of the Ohio valley. He seems first to have attracted wide attention among the western Baptists in 1820, as the result of a much-publicized debate on baptism in which he upheld the adult-immersionist point of view. It was his uncompromising opposition to the missionary system coupled with his rejection of the dogma

of predestination which gained for him his widest following, however. The acclaim accorded him in certain Baptist circles encouraged him to undertake the publication of the *Christian Baptist*, in 1823, and it was through his activities as editor that his ideas gained currency.

From the very outset, the *Christian Baptist* focused its attention upon the iniquities of the proposed Baptist missionary system. Echoing the famous words of President Monroe, Campbell declared that the program was a new kind of "Holy Alliance", designed to undermine and betray the cause of religious liberty. The whole monstrous system of missionary societies, in his opinion, smacked of Jesuitry and Romanism, and rested solely on a money basis. He scoffed at the idea that only a professionally-trained ministry was capable of interpreting revelation, and denounced in a fashion that would have aroused the envy of Daniel Parker all who proposed to "teach religion" for "hire."¹

The scope which Campbell set for his program seems gradually to have expanded as his popularity grew. In expressing his thoroughgoing dislike for sectarian competition, he argued that a missionary movement bent on propagating the peculiar dogmas of the various existing churches would only aggravate an evil system. The first step, therefore, must be directed toward reforming the church at home. All denominations should abandon the defense of the creeds which kept them apart and center their attention on the unifying issue of the Christhood of Jesus, taking the New Testament as their guide. He set forth in the *Christian Baptist* what he termed the "Ancient Order of Things," which he pro-

1 *The Christian Baptist*, I, nos. 3, 4, 5; II, no. 3; VII, no. 12.

jected as a kind of basis of unity. Campbell also challenged the extravagant claims frequently advanced with respect to the direct agency of the Holy Spirit in the matter of conversion and calls to the ministry. He seems to have concluded that the Baptists were probably the group most capable of being reformed along the lines suggested.² The principle of Christian unity espoused by the reformers compensated for the negative aspects of their opposition to other progressive measures and elicited an extraordinary amount of zeal within many Baptist congregations.

Campbell's movement also found a very sympathetic response among the congregations of the so-called "New Light" or Christian churches scattered over Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio. The group had been started early in the century by one elder Barton W. Stone, in connection with the Second Awakening. Stone's movement had been essentially evangelistic in character, in contrast to the proselyting aspects of much of Campbell's agitation. The "New-Light" group desired to make of conversion a simpler and more understandable process, ridding it of theological subtleties and such morbid practices as the agonizing of penitents, the prolonged prayer for mourners, and those motor activities so often attributed directly to the divine presence. Their affinity to the reformers was based primarily on a common opposition to certain extravagant interpretations of the Heavenly initiative to be found in much of Calvinistic thought. Although Stone's churches had participated in the formation of the first delegated Conference of the Christian Church in 1820, they derive their principal significance in Indiana from the fact that

² *Ibid.*, I, nos. 1 and 2; Errett Gates, *The Disciples of Christ* (New York, 1905), 111-123.

they became a seedbed for Campbell's reformation. The *Christian Messenger*, which Stone started publishing in 1826, was short-lived.³

The proposals contained in the *Christian Baptist* offered a welcome alternative to those who disliked the missionary system and at the same time could not accept the implications of the predestinarian arguments customarily advanced against it. The sweep of Campbell's movement is attributable in large measure to his journalistic ability and the clever way in which he contrived to improve the opportunity presented to him. It is a significant fact that he made practically no immediate impression on the Baptists in areas of America unaffected by the anti-mission feeling.

Campbell's attack upon the missionary system was unrelenting. He dissected the published expense accounts of the missionary promoters to find data with which to substantiate his accusations of dishonesty and extravagance. He ridiculed with considerable effect the suggestion that the stories of the bacchanalian revels of ancient Greece and Rome included in the classical curriculum of the colleges would contribute to one's ability to preach the gospel. He would have nothing to do with the Eastern *graduates* and their "contemptible artifices" for gleaning money from needy folk. Foreign missions, said he, could be legitimately prosecuted only by the immigration of an entire congregation to a heathen land. He warned that if the activities of the "salaried priests" of the mission boards were not

3 Simon Addison, *The Contribution to the History of Doctrine of the Denomination Known as the Christian Church MS.* (University of Chicago, 1933), 9, 23; John Rogers, *Biography of Barton W. Stone* (Cincinnati, 1847), 33-42, 71, 76, 79; Spencer, I, 79, 132-133; Gates, 208-211; Cartwright, 29-33.

abruptly checked, they would surely establish an ecclesiastical hierarchy and destroy the democratic liberties of the church.⁴

So effectively presented were Campbell's arguments against missionary organizations, that some contemporaries believed that even the Hardshell Primitive Baptists would probably have followed him had it not been for his rejection of creeds. His program enjoyed the inestimable advantage over that of the Primitives of being a positive aggressive enterprise rather than a purely obstructive one. The intermediate Regular Baptists, most of whom were eventually to become supporters of missions, drew fire from both sides, and had no choice but to pursue a cautious and apologetic policy. Stone's followers were rapidly enlisting in the reformation by the end of the decade of the twenties. In 1829, representatives from "New Light," German Dunkard, and Free Will Baptist churches met at Edinburg, Indiana, and united on the basis of Campbell's teachings. When the formal union was consummated three years later, the combined group probably numbered some fifteen thousand adherents throughout the Ohio valley.⁵

4 *Christian Baptist*, I, nos. 3, 7; Addison, 17-23; Carroll, 124-54; Spencer I, 581; H. C. Vedder, *A History of the Baptists in the Middle States* (Philadelphia, 1898), 186-187. Campbell enjoyed referring to "missionary wheels and other forms of church gambling." He attacked salaried ministers thus: "All that the clergy sell is breath It is as little expense to a man who can talk to talk as it is for the laity to hear."

5 Carroll, 189; C. W. Cauble, *Disciples of Christ in Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1930), 34-45, 53-60; *Christian Baptist*, II, nos. 5, 7. Another point on which Campbell and Stone agreed with the Primitives was in the condemnation of musical instruments in the church. Although the reformers insisted that they did not foment discord, the evidence to the contrary seems to be abundant. Wrote a Kentucky church in 1830: "Some of the churches in Kentucky are so tore to pieces we believe it our duty to pray the Lord to keep such reformers from amongst us."

Meanwhile Campbell had moved on to another stage in his thinking. He anticipated that the union of all Christian bodies was at hand and that such a development would usher in the millennium. He had made the following vague prophecy as early as 1826:

"Mankind is certainly moving in the horizon of some great and eventful change into the center of which all society will inevitably speedily be carried. . . . The time has certainly arrived when the powers and principalities of the world . . . must speedily be dissolved; and when the economy of God . . . shall suddenly make its appearance. . . . In the approaching age political authority will be confined to the regulation of its proper concerns, and . . . the word of the Lord will have free course and be glorified in the salvation of thousands."⁶

In 1830, the *Christian Baptist* was displaced by a new periodical under the same editor, called the *Millennial Harbinger*. In the new paper, Campbell began to cement his followers into a unified church, making larger concessions to institutional needs.⁷

The Spread of the Disciples Movement in Indiana

Whereas the Kentucky Baptists largely recovered during the early thirties from the losses sustained to the reformers, the weaker Indiana churches were not able to do so. The controversy was evenly waged, with the result that an inordinate amount of bitterness was engendered. Primitive and other conservative Baptists began to accuse the entire non-predestinarian group of

⁶ *Christian Baptist*, III, no. 12; VII, no. 11, 12.

⁷ D. S. Burnet, *The Christian Baptist*, eighth edition, preface, p. 5; Gates, 182-185. In the *Millennial Harbinger*, the anti-mission issue fell into the background. Campbell eventually recognized that cooperation between congregations was necessary for conducting missions in heathen lands, even to the point of assembling a general convention for such purposes. He later became president of a missionary society.

being Campbellites.⁸ The reformers were accused of sacrilege in denying the functions of the Holy Spirit. Campbell's interpretation of baptism as a sort of "final link in the chain of experiences affording the assurance of salvation" was condemned as "baptismal regeneration," a doctrine which the Regular Baptists now strongly denied. The holding of weekly communion services by the Disciples was denounced as a Popish practice. But the primary cause of bitterness on the part of the Baptists was reflected in the charge that Campbell's followers were deliberate proselytizers and seceders.⁹

The Disciples communion as a distinct church made its first appearance in Indiana in the region of the Silver Creek Association, where the Primitive Baptists were also strong.¹⁰ In 1828-29, a majority of the Silver Creek Baptist Church, the oldest in the state, voted to accept the teachings of Campbell. A small protesting group under the leadership of Royce McCoy, who supported the missionary program, was excluded in the following year. Royce McCoy and his followers found temporary fellowship in the neighboring Lost River Association. But when the latter body adopted Parkerite views in 1833, the supporters of missions were left quite isolated and alone. They eventually succeeded in organizing the

8 Stott, 61-65; Bear Creek Church letters, 1830, 1832; Little Pigeon AM, 1830; Spencer, I, 527, 616-618, 642.

9 Addison, 32; Cornelia A. Montgomery, *Separation Between Baptists and Disciples in the Light of Modern Denominational Changes* MS. (University of Chicago, 1915), 14-17; Newman, 488-491. Campbell was more strict on baptism than was Stone. Whereas Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists sometimes joined hands in revivalist efforts, none did so with the reformers. See *The Regular Baptist*, I, 81-87.

10 Cauble, 26-29; Stott, 45. A few of Stone's "New Light" churches had appeared in the state as early as 1819. A number of churches in the vicinity of Silver Creek, including Vernon and Silver Creek itself, had questioned both the creed and the name of the Regular Baptists during the early twenties.

Bethel Missionary Baptist Association in 1837. Between the embattled "Old School Predestinarians", or Primitives, and the enthusiastic "reformers", the cause of the missionary Baptists fared badly in this section for many years.¹¹

A second quarter in which great excitement was experienced about the same time was the area of the Flat Rock churches, located immediately to the south and east of Indianapolis, to which reference has already been made. This Association had the misfortune of being in close contact, east and west, with both the "anti-means" Baptists of the Whitewater valley and the "two-seed" Baptists. Conn's Creek Association split off to affiliate with the former group in 1829, as explained above, and the Bethlehem Association in Johnson county joined the Parkerite faction in 1838. With such strong reactionary influences present, it is not surprising that the ideas of Campbell were accorded a hearing among the more liberally minded minority. In the latter group were included many of the most influential ministers of the Association such as elder Chauncey Butler, after whom Butler College was eventually named. He was until 1829 a regular attendant at the Flat Rock Association anniversaries.¹²

11 Cauble, 26-29; Stott, 46-48; J. R. Crandall, *The Early History of the Disciples of Christ in Indiana* MS. (University of Chicago, 1925), 14-28. George Matthews, writing to J. L. Holman in 1838 from New Albany, reported that the "Campbellites are taking people by storm."

12 West, *op. cit.*; Flat Rock AM, 1826-1829; John Reece, *Record of Flat Rock Association*, MS.; Gates, 220-221. Campbell's teachings were accepted by the Little Flat Rock church in 1829. A letter from one R. T. Brown, of Rush county, Indiana, published in the *Christian Baptist* in March, 1830, throws some light on the situation. Brown himself had been excluded from his local church for accepting Campbell's views, and he reported that John P. Thompson's Little Flat Rock Church was to be similarly tried at the next meeting of

In spite of considerable effort on the part of some to avoid a controversy over Campbell's teachings, the two extreme elements came to an open breach in the Associational meeting of 1831. Pamphlets were issued by both sides setting forth their arguments, and much ill feeling prevailed. Few congregations escaped a split, and the total membership roll of the Association suffered a loss of more than a hundred persons in a single year. The trouble did not quickly abate,¹³ and forward movement was paralyzed for many years thereafter. Any official gesture to support missions at the time would have precipitated further defections, either to the Primitive Baptists or to the Disciples. The following cautious pronouncement of the Association, made in 1835, illustrates the difficulties of the situation:

"We as an Association have never had anything to do with them [mission societies]; and as there is a difference of opinion existing amongst us on that subject, we would advise the churches . . . to lay no burdens on their members respecting these things. . . . Let us not fall by the way, neither let us bite and devour one another lest we be consumed one of another Let us therefore extend a hand of fellowship to all orderly brethren who keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace."¹⁴

the Association. He concluded as follows: "A general conspiracy is forming among the 'Orthodox Calvinistic Baptists' in Indiana, the object of which is to put a stop to the alarming spread of those principles contained in the *Christian Baptist*."

13 Flat Rock AM, 1831-1834. The figures were 771 in 1831 and 565 in 1832. The Circular Letter of the group in 1831 pled as follows: "Give no occasion to the world to say that you are a confused, distracted, and divided people." In 1834, the churches were exhorted not to reëmbark "upon the tempestuous ocean of turmoil and strife."

14 *Ibid.*, 1835. This letter was probably prepared with the assistance of Judge Jesse L. Holman of Aurora. A prior request made to him on the subject by the clerk of the Association, William B. Ewing, warned that a forthright statement must be avoided because of prevailing prejudices. See *Holman Correspondence*, July, 1935.

Not until the middle fifties did the Association cooperate officially in the promotion of foreign missions. This circumstance is all the more significant because the General Association of the state was organized at one of the Flat Rock churches, and Franklin College was located within this same area.¹⁵

The Indianapolis Association experienced almost as much difficulty with Campbell's movement as did the Flat Rock churches. The First Church of Indianapolis set a wise example in 1827, when it revised its creed and voted "to take the Scriptures for their guide exclusive of all other books or human inventions." The Association rescinded its doctrinal affirmation of predestination in the following year.¹⁶ Several churches thereupon withdrew in protest, and the conservative opposition immediately raised the charge that Campbellite heterodoxy prevailed within the body. A full investigation ensued, with the result that a number of the supposed doctrines of the reformers were defined in 1832. All the churches subscribing to them were asked to leave the Association. At least three entire churches and over one-fifth of the total membership were lost during the following two years. For almost a decade thereafter, practically no membership gains were realized.¹⁷

15 *Ibid.*, 1836, 1837, 1854, 1856. Losses to the Disciples continued for more than forty years as well as to the Methodists and United Brethren. Brandywine CM, 1834-50; Blue River CM, 1867-1874.

16 Indianapolis AM, 1827-1829; Indianapolis First CM, March to April, 1827, 1833. White River Association broke off correspondence relations on account of this action.

17 Indianapolis AM, 1830-1839. The following were condemned as being Campbellite doctrines: "That it is as easy to believe the Scripture as it is to hear and see, and that there is no regeneration but that received by immersion, and that there is no Holy Spirit received but after immersion." The issues of *The Regular Baptist* (1838-39) reveal much controversy over this issue of "baptismal regeneration." See I, 86-87.

In spite of the double purging of the predestinarians in the first instance and the reformers in the second, the Indianapolis Association, like that of Flat Rock, did not dare to espouse the missionary program. Even with able men like Ezra Fisher, a Home Mission Society appointee, as pastor of the Indianapolis Church from 1832 to 1836, the local church would go no further than to affiliate with the Baptist Tract Society. Fisher accomplished a valuable work in helping to form a state organization and in starting the Baptist college at Franklin, but he was no doubt glad to leave his discouraging post at Indianapolis in 1836. Subsequently, the same Association refused to approve the temperance cause or to undertake any local missionary project. In 1842, it flatly declined to affiliate with the General Association of the state.¹⁸

The controversy among the Baptists over Campbell's teachings spread to nearly every portion of the southern half of the state. Some missionary churches like Maria Creek avoided division by ruling that "believing or not believing in Articles of Faith is no bar to fellowship."¹⁹ Where exceptionally able leadership was enjoyed, as in the Coffee Creek, Laughery, Sand Creek, and Madison Associations, the schism made little headway. Generally speaking, however, neither church bodies nor Associations throughout the state ventured to court further trouble by openly espousing the missionary enterprise. The decade of the thirties was undoubtedly one of widespread stagnation and decline among the Indiana Baptists. Nor has the denomination ever been able fully to recover from the effects of this period of strife.²⁰

18 Indianapolis AM, 1833-1842; *Missions*, 24, p. 162.

19 Stott, 59.

20 Delphi CM, 1840-1849; Wirt CM, 1830-32; Coffee Creek

The General and Free Will Baptists; Benoni Stinson.

The Baptists in the southwestern "pocket" district of Indiana have a history quite apart from that of the rest of the state in many particulars. Their original doctrinal traditions were apparently those of the "United Baptists" of Kentucky, involving only a qualified acceptance of the Calvinistic creed of the Regulars.²¹ Among the arrivals in Vanderburg county in 1822 was a young man of twenty-four years named Benoni Stinson. He came from Wayne county, Kentucky, where he had recently been ordained as a Baptist minister. As a delegate of the New Hope church, in 1823, he attended the annual meeting of the Wabash District Association, where he encountered the rabid predestinarian emphasis for which that body was becoming famous. Unable to accept the views of Daniel Parker, Stinson soon found a more congenial fellowship within the small Liberty Baptist Church, located near Evansville. Within a year three other churches with a total membership of around two hundred were organized, all of whom accepted the doctrine of a general atonement. They formed the Liberty Association of General Baptists in 1824. Other churches from Warrick and Posey counties joined the group in 1826.

The movement of which Stinson was the guiding genius seems to have been entirely indigenous in char-

AM, 1830-1835; Laughery AM, 1834-1837; White River AM, and Little Pigeon AM, 1830-1840. The Disciples Church itself encountered great difficulty in organizing a state program in the forties and fifties. See Cauble, pp. 69-84.

21 Little Pigeon AM, 1821; D. B. Montgomery, *General Baptist History* (Evansville, 1882), 179. The rule of Little Pigeon was that "preaching that Christ died for every man should be no bar to fellowship."

acter. The Articles of Faith which they adopted, for example, were merely a local adaptation of the Regular Baptist creed. For more than a score of years, the General Baptists retained that corollary of the predestinarian doctrine known as the final perseverance of the saints.²² They were, nevertheless, inclusive in their fellowship. From the first, they based their practice of open communion on the affirmation that "the Lord's people . . . should be one at his table." They also declared that baptism was not the door to the church, but merely "a duty in answer to a good conscience." It is a significant commentary on the prevalence of religious controversy that they should have added the following article of faith:

"That it is our duty to be tender and affectionate to one another, and to study the happiness of the People of God in general, and to be singly engaged to promote the honor and glory of God."²³

Opposed by older leadership and with the tide running definitely against them for a time, the churches of the Liberty Association made little progress during the twenties. They counted, in fact, fewer members in 1830 than when the Association was organized. But the situation changed during the following decade. Several Gibson county churches joined in 1831, and in the same year the Association began to employ Stinson as their regular missionary agent. In 1836, they formally affiliated with the General Conference of Free

²² Montgomery, 210. In 1845, they changed the rule to read: "We believe that he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved."

²³ *Ibid.*, 210-213. Seven of the thirteen articles first adopted were identical with those in the Regular Baptist creed.

Baptists, meeting in Vermont. They recorded at the time a total membership of 471.²⁴

For a number of years the General Baptists were not regarded as differing essentially from the missionary churches in the East.²⁵ But the other Baptists in the immediate vicinity were conservative and insisted that the standards of the new body departed too widely from traditional practices to admit a free exchange of membership. With the forming of the Evansville Regular Baptist Association in 1850, the two groups became more clearly differentiated.

The Evansville Association has remained a predominantly conservative organization throughout its history. It has been particularly susceptible to population movements and other influences coming northward from Kentucky and Tennessee. Such doctrines as "Old Landmarkism" have enjoyed wide acceptance there. They declared in this respect that immersion by administrators who were unorthodox, or who themselves had not been properly immersed was "alien" and therefore invalid. This rule probably gained greater currency because of the close proximity of two groups of Baptists traditionally opposed but otherwise so nearly identical.²⁶ The General Baptists were for long the more vigorous of the two groups, for they enjoyed the able leadership of Stinson until his death in 1867. The doctrines of Campbell gained practically no early acceptance within

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 184-225.

²⁵ Benedict, 871. In a statement here given by John M. Peck the two groups are recognized as the same.

²⁶ Newman, 495. No one carried the principle to its logical conclusion of a kind of apostolic succession in the line of properly qualified administrators of the ordinance. Within the author's memory, Baptist churches of this area have been sorely troubled by such questions as "alien immersion" and close communion.

this area, no doubt because of the fact that an alternative was made available by Stinson for those who refused to accept conservative Calvinism.²⁷

Akin to the General Baptists of the "pocket" district were the Free Will Baptists coming from New England. One such church appeared at Bryant's Creek in the southeastern corner of the state in 1820. It refused to join the "New Lights," and found fellowship with the anti-Calvinistic United Baptists of Ohio. This New England influence was later responsible for the wide acceptance of the New Hampshire Confession by the vast majority of the Indiana churches. In the extreme northeastern corner of the state, the immigration of Free Will Baptists was sufficiently large to develop an independent fellowship of considerable size. This group eventually became affiliated with the Indiana State Convention in the second decade of the twentieth century. Similar efforts to secure the adherence of the General Baptists have repeatedly failed, partly because of local jealousy, partly because of the extension of their communion southward into Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, and Arkansas.²⁸

27 Montgomery, 182-183. One Joel Hume, with whom Stinson often debated, kept the Salem Primitive Baptist Association in Posey county active until the sixties. Little Pigeon Association split over the missionary question in 1840, and later lost several churches to the Evansville Association. In 1852, the missionary Baptist remnant took the name of the Perry County Association. The later influx of German Catholic immigrants into Perry and Dubois counties greatly hindered Baptist growth.

28 I. D. Stewart, *The History of the Free Will Baptists for Half a Century*. 2 volumes (Dover, 1862), I, 421; Newman, 500; Stott, 33; McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 308-329.

The creed of the Free Baptists of New Hampshire, drawn up in 1834, contained the following articles in its ninth edition (1869): "God has endowed man with the power of free choice. . . . It appears a perfect inconsistency that God would provide a salvation for a less number than he really loved. . . . As the

A small number of Separate Baptists within the state also maintained their identity. They subscribe to no fixed creed, but jealously guard the old Separate Baptist traditions. Early efforts to develop a state organization and to join hands with similar Illinois and Kentucky groups were not successful. A State Association of Separate Baptists, including Northern Indiana, Indiana Central, and White River Associations was finally projected in 1898.²⁹ They undertook to support missionary efforts, Sunday Schools, and temperance propaganda, and the two member Associations in 1912 reported 2,200 members, 26 churches, and seven ministers. They were apparently avoiding connections with missionary Baptist churches near at hand, but were still seeking to establish affiliation with kindred bodies outside the state. Reports as late as 1926 indicate that they were suffering a decline in membership, and that their outlook was quite discouraging.³⁰

It is interesting to note in conclusion that neither of the two major questions of dispute remained a permanent difference between the Disciples and the main body of the Baptists. Practically all of the missionary churches later abandoned the Calvinistic creed which they had defended so stubbornly during the controversy. The followers of Campbell, on the other hand, expended

regenerate are placed in a state of trial during this life, their future obedience and final salvation are neither determined nor certain. . . . No man has a right to forbid these Tokens [of the Lord's Supper] to the least of His disciples."

29 Shelby Separate Baptist AM (Illinois), 1884; Indiana Central Separate Baptist AM, 29th session, 1898. The latter Association reported six foot-washings, 46 accessions, and 700 members.

30 *The Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the State Association of Separate Baptists in Christ* (Sharpesville, 1912); Indiana Central Baptist AM, 1926. Foot-washing was still being practiced by this group.

a great deal of energy in denouncing a missionary and educational program which they themselves came to accept eventually as a denominational necessity. As far as their goal of Christian unity was concerned, it progressed little beyond the naive hope that everybody else would agree with them, and resulted in the formation of one additional sect. In some localities, present differences between the two groups are almost negligible. It is the memory of the ancient fight with attending creedal battle-cries that constitutes the barrier between them.

Much the same judgment might be passed on the General Baptists as well, although their separation was accomplished in much better spirit on the whole. They have tended to grow increasingly conservative, however, as a result of their comparative isolation and their extension into unprogressive areas of the South. Their strongest churches have remained in Indiana, where they eventually established a college at Oakland City and a denominational paper at Owensville.³¹

Recovery among the Baptist churches can be attributed largely to the initiative demonstration by a few courageous individuals who determined to act upon their faith in the much-maligned missionary venture. It is to the development of this indigenous missionary program that we now turn.

³¹ Efforts to unite the two groups in the twentieth century will be discussed below in chapters X and XI.

CHAPTER IV

THE INITIATION OF A MISSIONARY PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE

A decade or more of debate along lines of doctrinal differences and varying ideas of church polity had accomplished nothing to lift the Baptists of Indiana out of the welter of controversy and schism. The undertaking of any direct frontal attack upon the theological strongholds of the anti-mission forces by the more progressive elements within the church was obviously futile. The premises of the argument must first be shifted from such theoretical considerations to the practical problem of promoting an adequate church program within the state. The imperative need, therefore, was that various groups, who might not be entirely in agreement on every question, should be willing to cooperate in the execution of a tangible program which the churches of Indiana themselves would create and direct. The benevolent institutions, once begun, would have to win their way by demonstrating their own inherent usefulness to the denomination.

The first missionary effort of a practical nature which appeared within the state was that of the Indian mission of Isaac McCoy. The vicarious challenge of McCoy's career did comparatively little to resolve the missionary controversy at the time, but it did point to the problem and enlist sympathies and interest of able men who strove mightily in later years to create the practical agencies for a progressive program.

Isaac McCoy's Indian Mission.

The McCoy's came to Clark county, Indiana, from Kentucky in 1804, Isaac being twenty years old at the time and recently married to one Christina Polke. William McCoy, the father, was the pastor of the Silver Creek church for a time, and Isaac was a constituent member of the neighboring Fourteen Mile Creek church.¹ In 1809, he moved to Knox county, Indiana, near Vincennes, where he was ordained as the first pastor of a newly organized Maria Creek church. By trade he was a wagon and wheelmaker. He had enjoyed little formal schooling and was not regarded very highly as a preacher, although recognized generally as a man of excellent character. Although he subscribed to the usual Regular Baptist creed, he did not interpret the article on Predestination strictly, and his church was liberal enough to receive members from "New Light" bodies without re-baptism. For many years the cause of religion made little headway in the Maria Creek community, for the area was proverbial for its vices and suffered severely from the demoralization of the years of Indian warfare from 1811 to 1814. Not until McCoy made his heroic decision to devote himself to educational work among the Indians, in 1817, did any signs of religious enthusiasm appear. The revival which followed during 1818-19 in three of his churches has already been described in chapter II.²

1 Stott, 81; Fourteen Mile Creek CM, April 12, 1806, 1807. Isaac was born in Pennsylvania and came to Kentucky in 1790. His brothers, John, Royce, and James were ardent champions of missions. Eliza McCoy, the daughter of John, later joined her uncle in Indian mission work. Isaac was the third son. See J. F. Cady, "Isaac McCoy's Mission to the Indians of Indiana and Michigan," *Indiana History Bulletin*, (February, 1939).

2 Stott, 52-55; Isaac McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions*. (Washington, 1840), 155-156; *Latter Day Luminary*,

McCoy's sympathy for the Indians was apparently the result of his almost daily witness of their degradation and sufferings as they were encamped about the post of Vincennes. Bullied by the whites and victimized by their own craving for alcoholic liquors, the natives were an easy prey for the motley group of shopkeepers and traders of the town. The Indians were systematically stripped of their annuities, their furs, and even their weapons and clothing, being left in a pitiable and helpless condition.³ When McCoy disclosed his purpose to the Triennial Convention, in 1817, he apparently was surprised as well as gratified to receive a promise of aid for one year from the Board. Concluding that "it would be criminal in me to let the opportunity pass unimproved", he immediately resigned his pastorate and prepared to move his family some seventy miles northward into the wilderness to a site selected on Raccoon Creek.⁴ It is a tribute to his faith as well as to his kindly spirit that he should undertake so difficult an enterprise scarcely three years after the cessation of a savage Indian war, a struggle in which his brother-in-law, William Polke, and other members of his own congregation had participated.⁵

McCoy was quite aware of the fact that he was attempting an almost impossible task. Although the

I, 504-505, Letter from McCoy dated July 29, 1819. The creed of the Fourteen Mile church, drafted by McCoy himself, endorsed the "doctrine of Eternal election." A creed later prepared for his Ft. Wayne church included a qualification authorizing the minister to "command all men . . . to repent."

3 Morris Birkbek thus describes the post in 1818, in *Indiana as Seen by Early Travelers*, 181-182; McCoy, 55.

4 *Latter Day Luminary*, I, 44, letter dated January 19, 1818. This place was several miles north of the present site of Terre Haute.

5 McCoy, 46-47; Newman, 410. William Polke was wounded at Tippecanoe.

anti-mission agitation had not got under way in Indiana when he began, it was quite obvious that he could expect little support from his fellow Baptists. In general, they shared the prevailing attitude of the frontiersmen that the Indians had no rights or claims which the whites were obliged to respect. We have already noted that Wilson Thompson could not bring himself to join the enterprise, and that John M. Peck eventually severed his connection with the Triennial Convention when ordered to join McCoy at Fort Wayne.⁶

A more serious obstacle to this program came from the Indian traders. Wrote McCoy at the very outset of the enterprise:

"The influence of certain individuals whose interest it is to keep them [the Indians] in ignorance, is so great that I sometimes tremble for the cause. . . . There are serious difficulties attending our scheme which to the eye of human reason, may seem to threaten its very existence. Amongst these the capricious disposition of the Indians, and the interest of the traders are not least."⁷

McCoy enjoyed little support, moreover, from governmental agencies at first. A warm friend was removed in March, 1818, by the death of ex-Governor Thomas Posey who, as Indian agent to the Wea, Kickapoo, and Miami tribes, had been heartily in sympathy with McCoy's proposal. Although nominally committed to the task of civilizing the natives as settled agriculturalists, the Federal Government was effectively defeating this end by its actual policy of clearing the land of all Indian titles as rapidly as possible. No pretense was made of protecting the rights of the natives against the flood of

6 Babcock, 166-169, 246-251. Peck's decision was also influenced by consideration for his wife's health. Such family concerns did not deter McCoy.

7 *The Latter Day Luminary*, I, 44-45.

squatter trespassers and whiskey sellers entering their lands. On one occasion a government interpreter flatly refused to translate McCoy's words to the natives on the ground that "none but a fool would attempt to instruct Indians."⁸

After two years of discouraging effort on Raccoon Creek, McCoy became convinced that he must bury himself directly in the Indian country beyond the reach of the influence of the whites. Hearing that the government was planning to erect mills and smithies within the Miami reservation in north central Indiana, he conceived the idea that he might be appointed as superintendent of one of the mills thus securing governmental support for the mission. But before this plan could be realized the tide of white settlement advanced to such a point that the Miamis themselves were seriously affected by the demoralization of habitual intoxication. He therefore moved to Fort Wayne instead, in 1820, planning to proceed from that point into the more remote Indian country as soon as opportunity should be afforded. He outlined his program to his New England friends in the following words:

"A number of Indians at different times have been educated in the midst of white population, industry, economy, and refinement, who on returning home, associated with a people who possessed few motives to industry, and who imagined that they were as economical and as much refined, as any people on earth . . .; of course, the learned Indian found no use for his education, . . . while his friends lamented that he was ruined, as he knew so little about hunting, trapping, etc. Much the same may be said in regard to religious instruction, from a principle . . . of

8 *Ibid.*, I, 182-184; McCoy, 48. McCoy repeatedly tells how white squatters systematically drove the Indians before them, although such interlopers had no legal right whatever to the land.

politeness, they will give as decent attention to an address on the subject of civilization and religion, as ever Congress did to the president's message, and by the 'whooh' approve of all that is said . . .; when, in return if you please, they will let you know the advantages attending their manners and customs. Some person must reside near them, converse with them frequently, set them an example of industry, and take advantage of their hunger and cold in the winter storm, so that their privations shall subserve their best interests. Let the unhappy creatures sometimes realize the comforts of a warm room on a stormy night; let them be taught by actual experience, as well as by persuasive arguments, the great advantage to be derived from cattle, hogs, etc. . . . In a similar way could domestic economy be impressed on the females in the school, and on their mothers at home."⁹

McCoy's two-year stay at Fort Wayne was more fruitful than his previous effort had been. He gained the confidence of a great number of Indians and achieved a fair mastery of several of their languages. In spite of the strong predilection of the natives to the Roman Catholic faith as a result of long contacts with French and half-breed traders, McCoy collected a fairly large school of Indian children at the Fort. "Our success", he reported, "has astonished all in these regions who are acquainted with the character of these Indians." The authorities afforded him every encouragement, except that they would not coöperate in combating the flagrantly illegal liquor trade, which systematically absorbed most of the \$18,000 in annuities distributed to the natives at that place.¹⁰

9 *The Latter Day Luminary*, I, 183-185; also 412, 503-504.

10 McCoy, 143-144, 250. Traders caught red-handed were never brought to trial. No legitimate form of trade could compete with the liquor business, hence all engaged in it. McCoy's program was described by a visitor in 1820 as both orderly and effective, quite as unexpected as it was gratifying. See *Indiana as Seen*, 250.

By the year 1822 the steady demoralization of the Indians around the Fort forced McCoy to shift his mission farther into the interior. Fortunately for his enterprise, a new arrangement had been agreed upon at a conference on Indian affairs at Chicago providing McCoy with government funds for his project. He received a grant of one square mile of land on the St. Joseph River in the Pottawotami country just north of the Michigan line together with an appointment as Indian agent and as teacher. A farmer and blacksmith were also to be associated with his station. From the government he enjoyed patronage to the extent of \$1000 a year, as well as the expenditure of certain funds appropriated for Indian reform.

The Triennial Convention gave its blessing to the project, and christened the enterprise the Carey Mission.¹¹ It was not long however, before the Missionary Board began to lose interest in this project because of the heavy expenditures involved. In 1824 they withdrew their aid entirely, to the great distress of those at the mission.¹²

11 *The Latter Day Luminary*, II, 162-163. The Missionary Board aided in the choice of McCoy's assistants, but several whom they sent were unsatisfactory.

12 *American Baptist Magazine*, V, 84-85. To the criticism made by the Board that the Carey Mission should become self-supporting, McCoy replied: "I am not certain that there is now, or ever was a mission among the Indians which manufactured more than we do. There has been manufactured on our looms since last February almost 300 yards of cloth. . . . This year, besides five acres of oats, we have raised about 1500 bushels of corn, 400 bushels of potatoes, 120 bushels of turnips, etc. . . . We are wearing out very fast, and sometimes fear we shall hardly last until we are enforced. . . . No station among savage Indians, operating effectively, ever has supported itself or ever will. . . . You have no idea how we have toiled, and actually suffered for food, how we have tugged and contrived. . . . When our wants can no longer be borne we will raise our cry for help, so that it shall be heard in New England."

McCoy's efforts to supplement his income from Western sources were only moderately successful. Only three churches in Indiana assisted him, his own Maria Creek church, the Blue River Missionary Society, headed by his brother James, and the Aurora Missionary Society sponsored by Judge Jesse L. Holman. Both Kentucky and Ohio Baptists responded more generously than did those of his own state. A merchant named Phillips of Dayton, Ohio, a non-Christian, repeatedly advanced goods to McCoy without interest, practically carrying the mission for a considerable period of time. Had it not been for a considerable increase of government grants to the Potawatomi tribe in 1825 and 1826, the enterprise would have been obliged to discontinue. In spite of the broad scope of his educational and agricultural program, McCoy did not allow his religious efforts to decline. Conversions among his white helpers and the Indians were numerous after 1824.¹³

For several years the Carey mission was in a prosperous condition. Agricultural land was cleared and fenced, a smithy built, and a school of forty to sixty Indian pupils kept busy at useful tasks. The whole program was so manifestly meritorious in winning the confidence of the Indians that governmental aid was greatly extended. Governor Cass of Michigan territory

¹³ McCoy, 86, 128; *American Baptist Magazine*, V, 224, 280-283; VI, 90-91; *Latter Day Luminary*, II, 386-387, 493; III, 313. McCoy's principal aid came from a treaty with the Pottawotamies in 1826, which provided that \$2000 per year be appropriated at the discretion of the President for educational purposes, in addition to provision for a blacksmith and a miller to grind their corn. The treaty also provided for the purchase of more than \$30,000 in supplies. Similar aid was extended see Charles J. Kappler (ed.) *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties Papers, Indian Affairs*, II, 680-681. For the Potawatomi treaty, see Charles J. Kappler (ed.) *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties* (Washington, 1904), 273ff.

assisted at various times. McCoy himself made repeated trips to the East for conferences with the Mission Board and with Secretary of War Calhoun in behalf of the support of his program.

But it was not long until the whiskey sellers again began to demoralize the program. Becoming convinced eventually that the Indians must be removed, McCoy obtained a commission from President Adams in 1828 to make the first exploration across the Mississippi River looking toward the establishment of a permanent home for the Indians beyond the reach of the white population. He personally superintended the original explorations preceding the removal of the Potawatomi and Ottawa tribes to their new homes in Kansas and continued his labors among them for more than a decade thereafter. He returned to the vicinity of his original Indiana home in 1843, when he organized the American Indian Mission Association with headquarters at Louisville.¹⁴

It is a difficult matter to identify many tangible evidences of the influence which McCoy's career had upon the anti-mission issue within Indiana Baptist churches. His contribution was by demonstration rather than by argument. He provided in the first place, an indigenous program to which the various missionary bodies in the state could be asked to contribute. The men and women whom he set to work collecting livestock, grain, money, clothing, flax, yarn, and thread for the aid of the mission, inevitably lost interest in theological controversies. It was a pity, in this respect, that

¹⁴ W. S. Stewart, 208-214. Johnston Lykins was McCoy's most faithful helper, marrying McCoy's daughter. Lykins translated Matthew into the Pottawotami language. William Polke served as farmer-missionary to the Ottawa Indians for a time under McCoy's direction.

so few Indiana churches shared in this sort of activity. In the second place, the terrific hardships which McCoy and his family endured in the wilderness, gave the lie to the charge that all missionaries were dishonest selfish men concerned only for the securing of power and ease. In the light of such a personality, the petty accusations and cheap ridicule previously directed toward missions melted away. When McCoy returned to Louisville in the forties, there were few indeed among his fellow Baptists who would dare speak disparagingly of what he had done. Undoubtedly the spirit of this kindly man, the pages of whose autobiography reflects not a trace of bitterness toward those who opposed him, contributed much not only for the uplift of his Indian friends, but also for the enlightenment of many of his narrow-visioned Baptist brethren in the western states.¹⁵ Finally, there can be traced a definite connection between McCoy's missionary efforts and the organization of the General Association of Baptists for the state in 1833.

The Organization of the General Association.

In the promotion of a positive missionary movement among the Baptists of Indiana, Judge Jesse L. Holman of Aurora occupied the central position. Holman came to Indiana from Kentucky in 1810 at the age of twenty-six, leaving a prosperous law practice at Carrollton where he had married the daughter of a wealthy local judge. An important factor in the move was his growing aversion to the institution of slavery. Although orphaned at the age of four years, and the fourth of six children, he had managed to secure an unusually good education.

¹⁵ *Holman Correspondence*, 1823-1827; McCoy, 9-35; W. N. Wyeth, *Isaac McCoy; Christina McCoy* (Philadelphia, 1895), 101-112. Numerous letters to Holman from Martin, Polke, and McCoy indicate the genuine friendship which existed between these men.

He read law under the tutelage of no less person than Henry Clay. Receiving a commission from Governor Harrison as District Attorney shortly after his arrival, Holman rose rapidly in the Hoosier political world. He was a member of the territorial legislature in 1814, and was President of the Council of that body in the following year. He was appointed a member of the Supreme Court of the new state in 1816, a post which he held continuously until 1830. He was subsequently appointed to a Federal judgeship.¹⁶

Preoccupied throughout his earlier life with political affairs, although converted at the age of seventeen, Holman seems not to have become particularly interested in religious matters until the Baptist missionary program was projected. Being a man of progressive views, he was one of the first men in the state to acclaim this enterprise, at the Laughery Association in 1818.¹⁷ In 1820 he aided in the founding of the Aurora church. He immediately organized general and female missionary societies at Aurora, and in 1824 sponsored the first Baptist Sunday School in the state, of which he was the perpetual superintendent. The first pastor of the Aurora church was paid a fixed compensation in 1823, Holman pledging five times as much as any of his brethren to this obligation. Extending his activities beyond his immediate community, he established cooperating Bible

16 *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Chronicle* (1842) 233-238. The Holmans left Virginia before the close of the Revolution. His mother was responsible for his educational training, and his wife, Elizabeth Masterson, was a woman of unusual culture for that time. They called their home Veraestau, located on the crest of a magnificent hill just below the village of Aurora. Holman was defeated for the U. S. Senate in 1831. From 1835 until his death in 1842 he was Judge of the Federal District Court.

17 See Chapter II, note 13.

societies at Rising Sun, Willow Fork, and elsewhere, and undertook the huge task of providing every destitute family within his county with a copy of the Scriptures.¹⁸

Holman's attention was drawn to the significance of McCoy's work among the Indians by his early acquaintance with William Polke at the state capital at Corydon. The idea of establishing a state organization for the support of McCoy's mission was born in the minds of these two men in 1820.¹⁹ Polke proposed at the time that the Judge draft a constitution for such an organization. Any immediate action was forestalled, however, by the rising chorus of opposition on the part of the Baptist churches toward all benevolences.

After McCoy moved to his new location at Carey Mission, the idea was revived in the spring of 1823. Polke, who was now actively associated with McCoy's enterprise, suggested that Holman and he place the matter of a state missionary organization (as tactfully as possible) before the various Associational bodies which they would attend during the year.²⁰ The matter became more urgent after the Triennial Convention abandoned McCoy's work in 1824. The following excerpt from a letter from Polke to Holman dated Sept. 17, 1824, outlines their plan:

"On the 18th ultimo I left Carey in order to come in

18 *Holman Correspondence*, James Hunter to J. L. Holman from Lawrenceburg June 17, 1828; E. R. Fairchild to same, no date. Few churches dared introduce Sunday Schools, for such activities constituted a desecration of God's house in the minds of many pious folk. They were usually promoted as undenominational enterprises. See Edwin W. Rice, *The Sunday School Movement and the American Sunday School Union* (Philadelphia, 1927), 49, 128-133.

19 *Ibid.*, Polke to Holman from Corydon, December 18, 1820. Polke was also prominent politically, being especially active in Harrison's campaign in 1840.

20 *Ibid.*, Same to same, April 14, 1823.

here to attend to some of my private Business and also to attend to some of the Associations in order to plead the cause of missions to the Indians. . . . [If] Christians who now oppose missions as useless Could see the wretched situation of these Children of the forest and witness their gratitude in Receiving Cloaths to Keep them warm and could hear some of them . . . singing, 'Jesus sought me when a stranger', [they] would be ashamed of their opposition and would be willing to give a small part of what the lord has bestowed upon them. . . . Considerable might be saved . . . even in these hard times by avoiding some of the luxuries which Christians are in the habit of making use of, for Instance let every Christian in the Western Country use one gallon less of ardent Spirits in his family in the Course of the year and apply the savings to the Support of the Gospel in some Way how much good might be Done. . . . Could one or two pious judicious Baptist preachers be supported to travel and preach through the new settlements of Indiana where are many scattered Brethren and small Churches (some almost without Discipline), much good might be Done. . . . Can not some means be Devised by uniting our Brethren of this state in some measure of the Kind? [sic]²¹

Apparently these early attempts to promote such measures served only to aggravate the opposition. Polke's Maria Creek Church was excluded from the Wabash District Association in 1824, as we have seen, and little progress was made in other quarters. The tide was running definitely against the proposal.²² The missionary program within the states still remained the work of isolated individuals to perform.

As the decade of the twenties wore on, Judge Holman's contacts widened and his activities expanded.

21 *Ibid.*, Wm. Polke to Holman, Sept. 17, 1824, from Knox County, Indiana.

22 Babcock, 206-208, 213, 241. John Peck formed a Sunday School Society in Knox county in 1825, and later distributed Bibles in southern Indiana.

Through his acquaintance with John M. Peck made in 1826, he was placed in active touch with the Massachusetts Missionary Society. On numerous later occasions Holman provided the Society with valuable information concerning destitute areas and prospective missionaries resident in them who might serve for part or full time. In 1830, he was elected one of the Vice-Presidents of the American Sunday School Union of Philadelphia.²³

He organized an Indiana Bible Society in 1831, which distributed almost four hundred volumes in the first year alone, Holman paying from his own pocket one-fourth of the cost.²⁴ A Sunday School Union which he sponsored in his own county included twenty schools, 1200 scholars, and some 200 teachers during the early thirties.²⁵

But the herculean efforts of one man, however vigorous, could not possibly meet the need. The Baptists were losing ground by their endless internal controversies, while other denominations were pushing ahead. The Methodists were especially active in promoting Sunday Schools, and the Presbyterians of the State had organized a missionary society in 1822, a Union Sunday School Society in 1825, and a State Educational Society in 1826.²⁶ A responsible Baptist agency within the state

23 *Ibid.*, D. Sharp to J. L. Holman, June 24, 1828; Howard Malcolm to same, December, 1829, both from Boston; Fred A. Packard to J. L. Holman, June 8, 1830.

24 *Ibid.*, Isaac Coe to J. L. Holman, 1831. Agents canvassed Franklin and Fayette counties, New Albany, and Indianapolis encountering much opposition and prejudice. Robert John to same, August 5, 1831.

25 *The Baptist Memorial*, 1842, 200-201.

26 *Ibid.*; *Indiana As Seen*, 502 (1827). When the Aurora church became destitute in 1834, Holman accepted ordination and served as its pastor until his death. [*History of Aurora Church* (1920)]. One argument against the united program

must be established in order to coordinate denominational activities and to achieve effective cooperation with Eastern bodies of a general character. When the Massachusetts Sunday School Union in 1831 offered to devote \$1000 to promotional work for two years within Indiana if a local Union would raise an equal amount, Holman's group was too small to undertake the task, and the opportunity was consequently lost.²⁷ Many inquiries were being received by Holman from ministers seeking information about the possibilities of locating in Indiana, and from others relative to matters of general denominational interest.²⁸ A central clearing house for such questions was becoming a necessity. Meanwhile Ohio Baptists had established a state organization in 1826 and Kentucky was attempting one in 1831.²⁹ If the forces of schism were to be turned back, and if the denomination was to keep pace with the times, some more general approach to the missionary program must be attempted. But the resources for such a move were sadly lacking.

The first major step toward meeting the desperate needs of the Baptists of the Ohio Valley came about through the efforts of John M. Peck. With the coopera-

was the charge that the Presbyterians were planning to establish their system by law. Rice, 133.

27 *Holman Correspondence*, H. Bullard to J. L. Holman from Boston, May 16, 1831.

28 *Ibid.*, Reuben Coffey asked him to solicit aid for the Bloomington church, Sept. 30, 1835. A letter from Cincinnati, Jan. 28, 1831, introduced one Peter Powell, the agent of the Baptist General Tract Society, and asked concerning attitude of Indiana brethren toward the proposed Seminary at Newport, Kentucky. George Matthews wrote from Cleveland, August 18, 1834, asking about an opening for a pastorate. Fort Wayne asked assistance in 1833 in securing a Baptist preacher, etc.

29 Carroll, 208-209. The Kentucky Association was actually established in 1837.

tion of Jonathan Going of the Massachusetts Missionary Society, Peck organized, in 1832, the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Taking over the work of the Massachusetts Society in the West, this new organization conducted a much wider appeal throughout the Eastern states and was able to extend the program. Starting with seven missionaries sent to Indiana during the first year, the work of the Society within the state steadily expanded, affording invaluable assistance to the cause.³⁰ Ezra Fisher came to the Indianapolis church; William Rees went to Delphi; Daniel Palmer to southeastern Indiana; M. Fairfield acted as state agent; Henry J. Hall was sent to La Grange county; George Matthews to Lawrenceburg; brothers Nathaniel and Dr. J. L. Richmond to Madison county; J. V. A. Wood and Eliphalet Williams to Shelby county; and Reuben Coffey to Monroe county. All arrived in 1832-34. Local leaders such as Thomas Hill Jr., Lewis Morgan, and Samuel Harding also accepted missionary appointments. It was the result of the impact of this vigorous group of younger men that the missionary program in Indiana finally got under way.³¹

The organizing of the General Association was accomplished at a meeting held at the home of Lewis Morgan in the spring of 1833. It is not clear whether the meeting was called for that specific purpose or whether merely to settle mutual problems of the Flat Rock and Indianapolis Associations.³²

30 Haskins, 23. Home Mission aid to Ohio was gradually withdrawn after 1836.

31 GAM, 1850, obituary of William Rees; *Lawrence H. Coffey, Thomas Coffey and His Descendants* (Chattanooga, 1881) 99-102. Coffey was an expert plowmaker, and was moderately well-to-do; see Newman, 419-423. Most of the missionaries were around thirty years of age.

32 The following resolution appears in the Flat Rock As-

The fact that both Associations were being sorely harassed at the time by the missionary and Campbellite schisms provided an excuse for the meeting, but the leaders probably contemplated action more far-reaching than those openly avowed. At any rate the friends of benevolences throughout the state got the impression that the meeting was to be of a general missionary character and the meeting was so advertised in the *Cross and Journal* of Cincinnati by William Rees. Judge Holman sent a later notice to the same paper, and, on his own initiative, prepared a constitution for a state organization the need of which he had so long recognized.

Thus it happened that forty-one brethren assembled at Brandywine meeting-house in Shelby county on the appointed day, April 26, 1833. They represented twenty different churches scattered through no less than fifteen counties in Indiana. Four men from Ohio were present. Judge Holman was selected as the Moderator of the meeting and Ezra Fisher was chosen as corresponding secretary.³³

sociation Minutes for 1832: "Agreed to hold a conference meeting at Brother Lewis Morgan's the Friday before the 4th Saturday in April, 1833, with the Indianapolis Association to consult on the best measures to promote the honor and prosperity of the cause of Christ; and particularly to encourage practical piety in the Churches." The minutes of the Indianapolis Association, which had met previously, in August, make no reference to this meeting.

³³ *Diary of John Reece*, MS.: GAM, 1850, from account by T. R. Creese; same for April 26-28, 1833. The Delphi Church voted the following resolution on April 13, 1833: "Agreed that we send Brethren William Rees and John Knight to meet in convention with such other Brethren as may feel interested in attending a meeting that is appointed to be held at Dr. Lewis Morgan's . . . on the Friday before the forth Lord's day in April for the purpose of adopting some Gospel plan of supplying the destitute of our own State with the preaching of the Gospel." This proposal had already been sufficiently aired in Laughery Association for several churches to have

The constitution for the new organization clearly reflected the nature and seriousness of the difficulties which the action would inevitably encounter from the vast majority of the Baptists of the State. In the first place the name State Convention was set aside in favor of the less offensive title "General Association of Baptists in the State of Indiana." It was designed "to unite the Baptists of Indiana in some uniform plan, for promoting the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom within the bounds of the State, by a more general spread of the gospel." All persons employed by the Association should be members in good standing in a Regular Baptist church, qualified on Scriptural grounds, and chosen "without any special regard to their literary attainments." They should receive only moderate compensation, "leaving them to look for their chief reward from a higher source." The officers of the Association were to receive no compensation except for books, paper, and postage. Delegates to the Association were to be drawn from contributing agencies regardless of the amount given, one from each church or society, and three from each Association. The Constitution also attempted to disarm the opposition by the following provision:

"This Association shall never attempt to exercise any authority over any church or particular association; . . . each church is sovereign and independent. . . . The Association shall never pretend to exercise any right to call any person to the ministry of the gospel; nor shall it ever employ any to preach, but such as have been regularly ordained. This Article of this Constitution shall forever remain unalterable."³⁴

34 GAM, April 1833.

In an accompanying statement, the churches were voted disapproval of the prospective State Convention. See Bear Creek Letter, 1832, *Holman Correspondence*.

urged to examine the plan prayerfully and thoroughly before passing judgment upon it. The plan suggested had worked to advantage elsewhere. How, it was asked, could the little churches hope to make headway single-handedly against the "moral wilderness" of Indiana? The only way to reach the destitute portions of the state was to support ministers who could give their full time to the work.

The first regular meeting of the General Association was held at Indianapolis in the following October. Attendance was meager and the program exceedingly limited. Only thirteen churches and eight societies were represented and only \$135 was reported collected. Perhaps their most important action was the preparation of a circular letter which argued powerfully in favor of the financial support of the local ministers. The laborer, it insisted, was worthy of his hire. To force pastors to earn a separate livelihood engendered in them a worldly spirit, and contributed directly to the dearth of ministers which rendered the church powerless to combat error. The friends of the mission cause were urged at the same time to "exercise all long suffering and patience toward those who may have honest and conscientious scruples upon the subject", avoiding everything "calculated to elicit unkind feelings or hard expressions."³⁵

The program of the General Association during the first decade and more of its existence was, of necessity, small in scope. The average income enjoyed by the organization from 1833 to 1839 was less than \$300 annually, and for several of these years it was less than

³⁵ *Ibid.*, April and October, 1833. Three men spent about one month each gratis in exploring the ground and soliciting support.

half that amount. It was, therefore, impossible to employ a regular full time agent during most of the period. Samuel Harding³⁶ served in this capacity for nine months during the first year, partly supported by the Home Mission Society.³⁷ Thomas Hill, Jr. served as agent from 1836 to 1838, and enlisted the coöperative services of several other ministers for short terms of service.³⁸

It was not until 1840 that a really effective state program could be undertaken by the Association, with William Rees of Delphi as full time agent. During that year, no less than twenty ministers contributed from one to three months labor each, travelling 8700 miles and forming twelve new churches. The first need was for a survey of the needs of the denomination. Appalling conditions were revealed. Churches were wasting their energies in purposeless strife, although some signs of recovery were in evidence. Ministers were for the most part entirely unpaid, while many churches were completely destitute and pastorless, often too lifeless to look for a minister.³⁹ The need for an expanded state work was perfectly obvious.

36 Harding shared with Lewis Morgan the leadership of the liberal group of the Flat Rock Association. He was at his best as a travelling agent where his "affability" and "fine social powers" were calculated to disarm suspicion. His death in 1835 was a severe blow to the benevolent cause. Spencer, I, 245-246.

37 *Holman Correspondence*, Ezra Fisher to Holman, May 12, 1834.

38 Thomas Hill, Jr. and Sr. were early leaders in the Coffee Creek Association. They were intelligent, charitable men, with unusually fine singing voices. Hill received \$250 or less annually for his services, and assisting ministers were compensated at the rate of \$16.67 per month. Sickness greatly interfered with the program in 1838-39.

39 GAM, 1834-1841. For the two years, 1840-41, the income of the Association totalled \$2500. *Seventh Annual Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Society*, (1841), 36.

The economic collapse and unparalleled money difficulties in the western country consequent upon the panic of 1837 brought the program to an abrupt halt in 1842. Receipts of the Association shrank to a mere \$87 in 1843-44. Contributions were received in local scrip, calico, and even worn shoes. Within the same year, Judge Holman and four other staunch supporters of the General Association died. It was a number of years before the movement recovered from this staggering blow.⁴⁰

Undoubtedly the activities of the General Association did much within the first decade to break down the provincial prejudice against the whole benevolent enterprise. Until this domestic opposition had been neutralized by some such indigenous effort undertaken by men whom the rank and file of the Baptists did not distrust, little progress could have been made by outside agencies.⁴¹ There were other more immediate advantages. The delegates found the yearly assemblies mutually helpful. Contacts made there with representative Baptists from the neighboring states and even the more distant Tennessee and Mississippi Conventions served to broaden their concept of the missionary task. Delegates were sent from Indiana to New York state in 1839 to aid in the forming of the American Baptist

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1842-1844. The highest representation at annual meetings up to 1844 was twenty-four churches and seven Associations, in 1841. While Holman lived, the Aurora church led the list of contributing churches. Within two years after his death, Aurora suffered a split which impaired its prosperity for many decades. Laughery AM, 1868.

⁴¹ *Holman Correspondence*, Fisher to Holman, May 12, 1834. Fisher had declared in 1834 that the effects of the first months' efforts were encouraging beyond expectation. He continued: "More of peace and harmony is enjoyed in the churches the present spring through the State than has been experienced for several years."

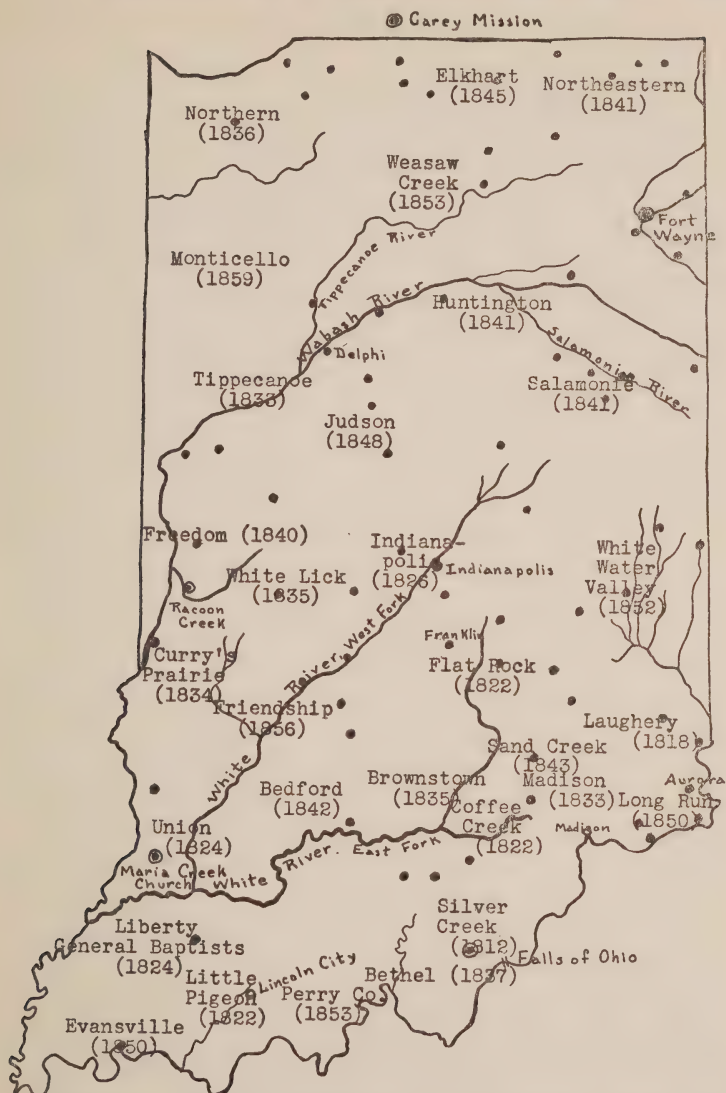
Sunday School Union. A Western Baptist Convention was held at Louisville in 1840, at which Indiana delegates participated in the initiation of a short-lived Western Baptist Publication and Sunday School Society. When Isaac McCoy returned to his home state to plead the cause of the Indians, at the annual meeting in 1843, he faced a far more encouraging situation than that which he had dared challenge single-handedly twenty years before.

Home Missionary Activity and Other Phases of the Benevolent Program.

Meanwhile, the representatives of the Home Mission Society laboring within the state contributed much to the acceptance of a more liberal point of view. Twelve home missionaries were working among the Indiana Baptist churches in 1838. The contribution reached its peak in 1847, when the Society spent \$2000 within the State aiding in the support of seventeen men.⁴² The large majority of these missionaries were young ministers sent from the East, but a considerable number were local men appointed under the recommendation of the officers of the General Association, who often indicated the field of labor as well. It was a matter of particular importance during the virtual collapse of the state work in 1843 and 1844, that the Society supported during these critical years nine and eleven men respectively for itinerant work among the churches.⁴³

42 GAM, 1835-1847. Peck worked for many years in Illinois being the founder of Shurtleff College; Going moved west in 1837 to become the President of the Granville, Ohio, Seminary (later Denison University). See the *Baptist Encyclopedia*. 457.

43 Haskins, 23-25; GAM, 1835-1848; Mode, 140-141. The reports of the General Association generously acknowledge the splendid assistance of the Home missionaries, and they repeatedly beg for its continuance.



Missionary Baptist Associations before 1860, with dates of organization. The seventy-two dots indicate the location of Home missionaries from 1832 to 1850, the ringed dots the places of residence of Isaac McCoy.

The Home missionaries were usually assigned to particular regions in the state, but served as itinerant preachers rather than as resident pastors. Preference in assignments was given to the main watercourses and principal routes of travel, so as to influence as much as possible the ever-moving stream of western settlers. The line of travel across northern Indiana became an area of particular concern.⁴⁴ The upper Wabash valley was another, and the route of the National Road a third. Growing urban centers like Terre Haute, Evansville, and Indianapolis received special attention. Little headway was made, however, in strongly conservative areas such as the entire southwestern corner and in the White-water valley.⁴⁵

The work of the missionaries was extremely difficult. The physical exertion of serving a score or more of struggling church and the destitute areas in between was exhausting. The ministers were sometimes obliged to spend as much as one-half of their time on horseback, plunging through the forest or over almost impassable roads amidst all sorts of weather. In addition they were obliged to endure all manner of personal abuse. Wrote one of the early workers after relating, without complaint, his fatiguing experiences:

"But after having done all, it is hard to be called by professed Baptists a Gospel speculator, laboring for the fleece and not for the flock."⁴⁶

44 The Valparaiso church enjoyed aid from the Society to the extent of \$150 in 1844 and 1845.

45 Haskins, 25-30. The map appended is adapted from Haskins, and indicates in a general way the distribution of Home missionaries from 1832 to 1850, seventy-two different locations in all. A complete list of the names and locations of all missionaries sent to Indiana can be found in Newman.

46 *Baptist Home Missions in North America*, 331; Haskins, 27-38. Reuben Coffey rode 1591 miles and preached 157 ser-

Rather than foment inevitable hostility by direct solicitation for the missionary cause, they bent their principal energies, in cooperation with the General Association, toward persuading the churches to acknowledge their obligation to support their own pastors.⁴⁷

The many difficulties encountered are well illustrated in a volume of manuscript memoirs of William M. Pratt, who, for a number of years after 1839 was a leading missionary within the state.⁴⁸ The first roads, he recorded, were nothing more than paths filled with stumps and logs and deep ruts. On one miserable stretch of road he consumed no less than five hours in proceeding only two miles. His wife died during his first year of service. He conducted a school for young ladies for a time in Crawfordsville to supplement his income; the largest fee for preaching which he records having received was two dollars. On one occasion he commented dejectedly that his clothes were worn out and he had only eleven cents in his pocket.⁴⁹ Sometimes he had difficulty securing lodgings in Baptist homes because he was a missionary, and he was frequently denied

mons in Putnam County in 1839-40. See *Ninth Report of the Baptist Home Mission Society* (1841), 22.

47 The Circular Letters of the General Association repeatedly (1833, 1839, 1841, 1848) stressed the necessity for supporting local pastors; they associated failure in this respect with the opposition to missions.

48 Pratt was born in New York of New England-bred parents and was but twenty-two when he came to Indiana. He was a distinguished student with a good preparatory and Seminary training. He organized the churches at Crawfordsville, South Bend, Mishawaka, Logansport, Lafayette, and elsewhere but spent the greater part of his career in Kentucky, to which state he removed in 1845. See Wm. Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia* 933-934, and J. A. Smith, *A History of the Baptists in the Western States East of the Mississippi* (Philadelphia, 1886), 56.

49 Pratt, *Memoirs*, MS, vol. I, pp. 7, 13, 15, 18, 21, 23; *Baptist Encyclopedia*, 933.

the use of Baptist pulpits for this reason.⁵⁰ In fact, he seems to have had far more intimate contacts with Methodist and Presbyterian ministers during the first year than with his fellow Baptists. In 1842, he refused the Presidency of the Franklin Manual Labor Institute on the grounds of its lack of denominational support. His experiences as a Baptist missionary in Indiana were by no means uniformly pleasant.⁵¹

The foreign missionary enterprise enjoyed less support in these early years from Indiana Baptists than did Home missions. This was notwithstanding the fact that Thomas Brown was sent as a missionary to Asia Minor in the middle thirties.⁵² The General Association regularly pledged its support to the foreign mission program, but made it distinctly secondary to local needs. Monthly prayer meetings were proposed at which collections might be taken. Not until 1840 did the annual report present a really vigorous argument, written by Holman, emphasizing the benefits accruing to the work, at home from the splendid achievements in foreign lands.⁵³ In 1844 the first substantial gift of \$203 was raised for the enterprise abroad as the result of a strong appeal by the General Association. This amount was

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, I, 12, 15, 20, 39. Pratt frequently preached at Asbury University (now DePauw), and also in Presbyterian churches.

⁵² *Holman Correspondence*, from Jas. W. McKennan, Indianapolis, Nov. 7, 1836. Holman is asked to address their missionary meeting on the anniversary of Brown's departure from "these woods" to Smyrna. *Ibid.*, from E. Rabney, Cincinnati, Nov. 16, 1838. The Sparta church contributed \$22.62 for foreign missions in 1838, one-third of which was deducted for difference in exchange.

⁵³ GAM, 1837, 1838, 1840. Holman was in close correspondence with Eastern leaders during these years; see *Correspondence*, from Alfred Bennett, July 6, 1839, Jan. 27, 1840, from L. Balles, March 30, 1840.

more than doubled by 1847 and it reached \$524 in 1850. In the ten years following 1836, however, the contributions to Baptist foreign missions from the churches of the younger, less advanced states of Michigan and Illinois were three times those of Indiana, and Ohio's was five times as great.⁵⁴

In its broader features the program of Christian benevolences was at the outset undenominational in character and emphasis. The great agencies for the distribution of literature were the non-sectarian American Bible Society and the American Tract Society; the American Sunday School Union was similarly organized. The Baptist General Tract Society, which was the only special enterprise initiated by Rice which survived, was not in the beginning concerned with the propagation of purely sectarian principles. A commentary in the *Columbian Star* accompanying the announcement of the organization of the Society in 1824 ran as follows: "However we may wish men to become *Baptists*, we wish all men to become *evangelical christians*."⁵⁵ Because of lack of funds, the program of the Baptist General Tract Society was distinctly subordinated for a number of years to that of the larger agencies for the distribution of religious literature. Mention has already been made of the cooperation of such men as Jesse Holman with the American Bible and Tract Societies in the distribution of their literature and with the Union Sunday School program.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ GAM, 1844, 1846, 1847, 1849, 1850.

⁵⁵ Daniel Gurden Stevens, *The First Hundred Years of the American Baptist Publication Society*. (Philadelphia, 1924), p. 5.

⁵⁶ *Eighth Annual Report of the American Tract Society* (1833), 19. *Holman Correspondence*, W. Wilder to Holman from New York, March 12, 1835, Holman to W. A. Hallock, no date. The American Tract Society contributed 42,000 pages

The tendency to restrict the activities of the Baptist General Tract Society more closely to the distribution of strictly denominational literature began in the early thirties. It was partly an expression of sectarian loyalty and partly a means of overcoming partisan opposition to all benevolences. The conviction was growing that Baptist hostility could be broken down more easily if the work were placed under the direction of their own men. Sunday Schools in particular seemed to demand the preparation and publication of distinctively denominational literature. A resolution of the Triennial Convention at Richmond in 1835 suggested, therefore, that the Tract Society enlarge its published offerings confining its new material "chiefly to such as set forth the peculiar . . . principles of the denomination." The policy was expressed as follows in one of Secretary Ira M. Allen's letters to Holman at the time:

"However kindly we may *feel* towards other denominations, sound policy requires us to act separately in reference to the great benevolent plan of the age. Presbyterians will not unite with us only as we are subordinates. Consequently we work with great disadvantage and the sacrifice is on our part. . . . Let us do our own work in our own way and we shall soon become a more united people. . . . We must have a Bible Society of our own, as it is now confidently expected that the American Bible Society will make no further grants of funds for the aid of our missionaries in Burma because they have translated "baptise" correctly into Burman. I hope therefore you will not pass resolutions for *union* measures with Presbyterians."⁵⁷

of material in Indiana in 1832-33. These included a number of 37½ cent volumes by Doddridge, Wilberforce, Edwards, Pike, along with *Pilgrims Progress* and a number of children's books. Holman contributed to its funds in 1835.

57 Stevens, 15, 26; Ira M. Allen to Holman, Oct. 14, 1835; J. M. Peck to Holman, July, 1834. Allen was particularly

The majority of the leaders of the newly organized General Association in Indiana were in favor of the more strictly denominational program. Holman alone seemed to have doubted the wisdom of breaking off relations with the general societies. Ezra Fisher felt obliged to protest vigorously to him in 1834 against Baptist participation in a proposed Indiana Sunday School Union which Holman apparently favored. Said Fisher:

“Baptist churches can be more readily induced to engage in the Sunday School cause when the business is in the hands of their own brethren. . . . I am strongly convinced that nobody but Baptists will ever attempt to bring up the flagging interests of the Baptists.”⁵⁸

Although the Baptist General Tract Society steadily gained in its support from denominational leaders in the state, the influence of the American Tract Society and the American Sunday School Union was not entirely eliminated among Baptists for a number of years. In fact, the Baptist General Tract Society handled many of the publications of the two larger agencies.⁵⁹

Another step in the development of separate Baptist agencies occurred in 1837, when the American and Foreign Bible Society was organized. This movement developed out of a controversy in connection with the translation of the word “baptise” in the Burman and Bengali versions of the New Testament. When the Boards of the American and British Societies refused

interested in Sunday School promotion among the Baptists, and prepared a *Baptist Manual* in 1835 which he attempted to place in every Baptist home in the Mississippi valley.

58 Fisher to Holman from Indianapolis, July 31, 1834.

59 *Sixteenth Annual Report of the American Tract Society* (1842) 45; *Twelfth Annual Report of the Baptist General Tract Society* (1836) 19; Stevens, 22. The Baptist Society established a depository in Washington, Indiana, in 1835, and had agents active in other sections.

to translate that word in the sense of immersion, the Baptists withdrew their support. Here was a definite issue in which a distinctive Baptist practice seemed to be at stake, and the decision was accorded general support from denominational leaders in Indiana as elsewhere. A State Bible Society was organized in 1840 as an auxiliary to the national one. It met annually in connection with the General Association, and contained 50 to 60 contributing members. A depository for Bibles was established at Lafayette in 1844. The American and Foreign Bible Society remained quite distinct from the Tract Society of the Baptists, and not until 1871 did the American Baptist Publication Society, successor to the Tract Society, undertake the publications and distribution of the Scriptures as a part of its own program.⁶⁰

The plans for more specific promotion of nation-wide Sunday School work among the Baptists were not matured until 1840. In response to the urging of various groups in the East, particularly that of the Hudson River Association in New York state, the Baptist General Tract Society expanded its program in that year and assumed the name of the American Baptist Publication Society and Sunday School Union. The latter part of this name was dropped in 1845. Abel R. Hinckley of Franklin was elected one of the Vice-Presidents of the Publication Society in its first year. Through the activity of John M. Peck, a Western Baptist Publication

⁶⁰ *Proceedings of the Bible Convention of Philadelphia*, April 26-29, 1837; *Second Annual Report of the American and Foreign Bible Society*, (1839), 42; 1840; Stevens, 48-50. John McCoy was the first President of the State Bible Society. An American Bible Union was formed in 1850 by progressive leaders who wished to revise the text of the Scriptures. Both Bible Societies continued to exist even after the Publication Society entered their field.

and Sunday School Society was organized at Louisville in 1841, cooperating through Peck with the Eastern society as long as funds could be obtained. Peck himself became the Corresponding Secretary of the general Publication Society in 1843, and, in a serious effort at religious education, undertook the gigantic task of distributing religious literature gratis throughout the destitute areas of the Western country. Many grants were made for the development of the libraries of ministers and Sunday Schools during the period of his leadership. The system of colporter distribution of the publications of the Society was also undertaken, twenty men being employed on commission for this work in 1845.⁶¹

The General Association of the State began to agitate in favor of Sunday School work in 1838. The activities of the committee in charge were confined during the first two years to argumentation only. Its reports stressed the numerous incidental advantages of the enterprise, such as teaching children to read, and keeping them out of mischief during hours that otherwise might be wasted in play or sinful activities. Sunday Schools were commended especially as a means of giving every member of the church a task to perform. Although such work was declared to be an indispensable part of the church program, the state organization was able to do very little indeed for its practical encouragement. The Baptists continued to be very backward in the development of Sunday Schools.⁶²

Along with the agitation for Sunday Schools, the friends of benevolent enterprises conceived the idea in

⁶¹ *Second and Third Annual Reports of the American Baptist Publication and Sunday School Society* (Philadelphia, 1841, 1842); Stevens, 21-22, 31-33.

⁶² GAM, 1837-1841.

1838 of originating a paper for circulation among the Baptists of the state. The *Cross and Journal* of Cincinnati and the *Banner and Pioneer* of Louisville were concerned with Ohio and Kentucky affairs respectively, and neither paper enjoyed wide circulation within Indiana.⁶³ By vote of the General Association, a monthly paper known as *The Regular Baptist* was projected. Both for financial as well as for propagandist considerations, a moderate tone was suggested in support of "old fashioned Regular Baptist principles." Elder T. W. Haynes, the agent for the Manual Labor Institute and a man with some previous writing experience in Tennessee, was made the editor. The first number appeared in December, 1838.⁶⁴

The attempt of editor Haynes to satisfy the proponents of missions on the one hand and to avoid offending the conservative faction at the same time illustrates well the difficulties involved in the promotion of missionary causes in general. The editor was in favor of allowing complete freedom of choice either by churches within the Associations, or by individuals within the various churches with respect to the maintenance of

63 The first named was the paper of the Ohio Convention, started in 1831 under the title of the *Baptist Weekly Journal of the Mississippi Valley*. It was joined shortly thereafter with the *Cross* of Frankfort, Kentucky, changing its name to the *Cross and Journal*. It was open in its support of the missionary program. Judge Holman was solicited by the editor in 1834 to assist in a futile effort to secure 1000 subscribers in Indiana. The *Baptist Banner* was started in Shelbyville, Ky.; it later moved to Louisville and absorbed J. M. Peck's paper, the *Western Pioneer*. The *Cross and Journal* changed its place of publication to Columbus, Ohio, in 1847, becoming the *Western Christian Journal*. See Spencer, I, 702-704; E. Robbins to Holman, April 14, 15, 1834.

64 GAM. 1838; *The Regular Baptist*, vol. 1, no. 1. It was a paper of sixteen pages plus the cover page, octavo, with subscription at \$1.00 a year.

connection with the missionary enterprise. He stated his purpose in the opening number, as follows:

"Recently a spirit of *legislation, intolerance, dictation, and non-fellowship, disunion, non-cooperation and non-correspondence* among Associations, churches and brethren has insinuated itself into the operations of the Regular Baptists under such circumstances as seem to paralyze the energies and usefulness of God's chosen people. To expose the evils of this spirit and its influences, and promote union and forbearance among associations, churches and brethren in this state upon gospel principles without a sacrifice of conscience, truth, or Baptist principles and practice, will be my aim *under God*, in conducting this periodical."

At the same time, the editor made dubious concessions to conservative sensibilities in matters of phraseology. "Benevolent effort," he argued, "does not always mean the Societies." In answer to the question posed by an imaginary reader in the first number, "Are you a missionary?", he suggested the following reply:

"No. I answer to no unscriptural name. I do the work of an Evangelist. Both words, however, signify the same thing. . . . I have been sent by a church of immersed believers. I have been ordained an Elder and Evangelist by the laying on of hands of the Presbytery. I have not been called, qualified and sent to preach the gospel by *any* society of men who are of the *world*. . . . I preach not for filthy lucre."⁶⁵

The tactics of Elder Haynes were undoubtedly ill-advised. Since the agents and sponsors of his enterprise were made up exclusively of supporters of missionary activity, he made no discernible impression upon the

⁶⁵ *The Regular Baptist*, I, no. 1, pp. 3-5, 12, 13, 19-21. The editor also declared in terms suggestive of anti-mission sentiment that he was "unwilling to substitute a knowledge of the classics for a call to preach by the Holy Ghost."

opponents of the cause, and succeeded only in arousing dismay among its friends. George Matthews, for example, wrote to Judge Holman, in obvious disgust after the appearance of the first issue, that Haynes' project might be appropriate for the do-nothing, anti-effort element, but that "for living epistles known and heard of all men, it will not do."⁶⁶

In an effort to clarify the situation, Elder John L. Richmond of Indianapolis contributed an able article to the third number presenting a forthright argument in favor of missions and missionaries, and taking the editor mildly to task for quibbling over the use of the term. Richmond saw no reason to hide his conviction that the opponents of missions were in the wrong, even if he did not wish to make the support of such activity a test for fellowship. The central fact upon which he focused attention was the great need for more and better preaching and pastoral care, with men eager to do it but prevented from doing so because of lack of support. He suggested that "when the churches shall attend to this, very few will have any desire to form societies." But the churches were weak individually, and the membership of most of them was sadly divided upon the missionary question. It was therefore logical and proper for those who were concerned about the situation to form and maintain societies or Conventions to promote the needed preaching of the gospel.

The exchange of letters between the two men continued for several issues thereafter. The editor assumed the air of a persecuted man and argued weakly that the word "missionary" was of French rather than of Hebrew or Greek origin, and therefore not a Biblical

66 Matthews to Holman from New Albany, Dec. 19, 1838.

term. It should not be used because it was offensive to some of the brethren. Richmond finally sent the following reasonable request:

"Believing that you are in favor of the united effort for the purpose of increasing the amount of preaching, I am desirous to see some of your arguments in favor of it."

Aside from the inclusion of many kinds of information respecting benevolent activities in the paper,⁶⁷ the editor refused to give the missionary cause as such any positive editorial support. The most that he would do was to ask that Richmond "become a mediator between me and my subscribers, and inform them, by my permission, that . . . I am . . . no anti-missionary, in the common sense of that word."⁶⁸

The last issue of the *Regular Baptist* that was published in Indianapolis was the July number, 1839. Aside from a reference to the annual exhibition conducted at the Manual Labor Institute, it contained little of interest or importance. Shortly thereafter, Haynes moved to Cincinnati, from which place a final number of the periodical appeared in November. In his swan song, the editor abandoned his scruples and announced his intention thereafter to advocate all forms of benevolent activities. He wrote:

"[The editor] is now fully convinced by personal experience, that, the only permanently successful method of operation upon this subject, is, to unfurl the banner in its most elevated standard of character without com-

67 Such as a "Brief History of the Burma Mission," the minutes of the meeting of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, a poem on the "Christian Rum Seller in his Closet" struggling with the Lord's Prayer, and advertisements for the Manual Labor Institute. See *The Regular Baptist*, I, pp. 13, 25-29, 36-39, 49, 63.

68 *Ibid.*, pp. 65-68.

promise. . . . He has been taught this lesson while seeking to win over the anti-mission brethren by excessive caution and moderation."

Almost the only item of information from Indiana that the final number contained was a minute of the General Association of 1839 telling of the appointment of a committee to make coöperative arrangements with the proprietors of the *Banner and Pioneer* of Louisville, by which Rev. A. R. Hinckley of Franklin was to become coeditor of that paper for Indiana.⁶⁹

The new arrangement proved to be little more successful than the previous one had been. The circulation of the *Banner and Pioneer* within the state was never large, and Hinckley's task was a difficult and thankless one. He spent a great deal of time preparing his weekly contributions, time that he could well have devoted to the interests of the Franklin Institute, and realized little remuneration beyond the actual postage charges. He was continually urged by the editors to remove to Jeffersonville, where he could be nearer the paper. Hinckley succumbed from the strain of his over-numerous responsibilities, and was buried at Franklin in 1841. The same arrangement with the *Banner* continued for two years thereafter, with Rev. E. D. Owen of Madison as the editor for Indiana.

In 1846, the General Association gave its support to a bimonthly paper of rather conservative character, known as the *Christian Messenger*, which Owen had started at Madison after he had severed his connection with the *Banner*. The headquarters of the publication

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 8, pp. 113-119. Compensation for Hinckley's services were to be derived from the appropriation of fifty cents of every subscription sold in the state of Indiana. Under similar arrangement, Peck was editor for Illinois and a Tennessee man for that state.

was moved to Indianapolis, where Owen was assisted by one Stewart. But it proved impossible for them to satisfy what they termed "the extremes and contrarities of opinion" prevailing among the Baptists of the state. The paper was sold to the *Ohio Journal* in 1849. The resulting *Journal and Messenger* of Cincinnati continued for a number of years to serve a large group of subscribers in Indiana.⁷⁰

The Organization of the Manual Labor Institute.

Perhaps the most ambitious enterprise which the leaders of the missionary movement in Indiana undertook was the foundation of a denominational college. The general lack of trained ministers among the Baptists was a matter of inescapable concern to those who wished to see the denomination emerge from its disastrous quarreling and division.

But the task of securing general acceptance for such an undertaking was an almost impossible one. There was probably greater prejudice against educational requirements for ministers than against any other phase of the missionary program. An educated ministry not only smacked of professionalism but tended also, by implication, to cast discredit upon the untrained and unpaid elders of most of the churches. Such a program of priestcraft, it was argued, must have as its motive opportunity for professional careers in the West in that of robbing the people of the Bible. The lack of creased the profound disrespect of the frontiersman for the practical value of academic pursuits.⁷¹

⁷⁰ GAM, 1838-1850; Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-371; J. Elliott to Holman, Aug. 10, 1839; Hinckley to Holman, Dec. 12-20, 1839, July 28, Oct. 8, 1840.

⁷¹ See John Taylor, *Thoughts on Missions* (1819), 9-10,

The leaders of the General Association in 1833 considered it unwise to jeopardize the prospect of uniting the Baptists of the state by pushing the educational enterprise immediately.⁷² Yet it was obvious to them that the cause of much of the confusion and lack of perspective in regard to the missionary movement was to be found in the prevailing ignorance of the preachers. The problem of correcting this situation was inescapable.⁷³ For more than a year the project was discussed by members of the General Association before any action was taken. An Indiana Baptist Education Society was finally organized in June, 1834. A year later a site was chosen near Franklin, Indiana, and thirty-five trustees for the school were selected. Samuel Harding was the first President of the Board, and Jesse Holman and Samuel Merrill were the Vice-Presidents. The names of the trustees and the original sponsors of the enterprise include practically every substantial leader within the state who was actively interested in the missionary enterprise.

In an effort to counteract social prejudice against academic pursuits and to aid in the financing of the

23-26. Alexander Campbell appealed directly to Western prejudices in his attack upon education for ministers. He asked what bearing the fables, wars, conspiracies, and debaucheries of ancient times had upon the ministers profession. Professional training, he said, produced only "a sanctimonious air, a holy gloom, . . . a pious sedateness . . . a kind of angelic demeanor in his gait, and a seraphic sweetness in all his movements." No ridicule could have been more effective than this suggestion of effeminacy. *Christian Baptist*, I, no. 6.

72 The Minutes of the General Association contain no reference to the educational project until 1836. Jesse Holman alone among the founders of the General Association, insisted upon launching immediately on an educational project. Fisher, in particular, cautioned against it. Fisher to Holman, August 10, 1833; Byrom Lawrence to Holman, August 21, 1833.

73 Lawrence to Holman, May 19, 1832; *American Baptist Magazine*, XI, 40-42 (Boston, 1831).

enterprise, it was decided to organize a school on the manual labor system, a practice common with frontier colleges at that time. Each student should devote a portion of his time to the cultivation of a farm which was to adjoin the campus. A number of the founders were particularly concerned that no "swarm of tender-fingered gentry" should be standing around watching others perform their tasks.⁷⁴ The full name of the school was the "Indiana Baptist Manual Labor Institute." The Education Society constituted a sort of residuary authority behind the trustees, and were specifically responsible for the promotion of ministerial training. The school itself was planned on a broad liberal basis, its object being "to promote a more generous knowledge of Science, Literature, and Biblical Criticism throughout the Baptist connection in Indiana." The faculty should all be members of Baptist churches.⁷⁵

The enterprise encountered serious difficulties during its early years. Franklin citizens donated eight acres of land and an additional eighty acres was purchased on credit. A small frame structure was built in the spring of 1836. The Principalship of the school was offered to a number of men, Judge Holman among them, before anyone could be found who was willing to undertake the enterprise. Not until the summer of 1837 did the Board employ Rev. Albert Freeman Tilton, a native of New Hampshire and a graduate of Waterville College, Maine, as teacher for the Institute. In anticipation of Tilton's arrival, Rev. A. R. Hinckley was persuaded to

⁷⁴ M. Fairfield to Holman, December 20, 1833, April 8, 1834. Samuel Merrill was the first treasurer of the state of Indiana and a leading pioneer citizen of Indianapolis.

⁷⁵ Indiana Baptist Manual Labor Institute, Trustees' Minutes, 1835-1836; Minutes of the Indiana Baptist Education Society, 1834-1836.

move to Franklin where he assumed the pastorate of the local Baptist church and prepared for the opening of the school. Classes began in the autumn of 1837, with about forty students in residence.⁷⁶

The educational program was given vigorous support by the General Association. Circular letters repeatedly called the attention of the Baptists to the necessity of increased training for both ministers and laity as a means of dispelling misunderstandings and putting an end to the animosity and bigotry which prevailed in so many quarters. Baptists were warned that they would have to be prepared to see others monopolize leadership in teaching and professional activities, as well as in religious affairs, if they failed to provide educational facilities.⁷⁷

It was very difficult to secure financial support sufficient to maintain the school, particularly after the depression of 1841-42 developed. The school very nearly died in 1840-41 when the Board was obliged to dismiss Professor Tilton. Only the most strenuous efforts saved it. Hinckley and Holman died within six months of each other in 1841-42. Finally in 1843 a President was secured in the person of George C. Chandler, a local minister of New England origins. A brick building was constructed, the name changed to Franklin College, and a program of collegiate instruction based upon a mathematical and classical curriculum was introduced.

⁷⁶ Trustees' Minutes, 1835-1837; Morgan to Holman, March 23, April 9, September 27, 1836. Hinckley was previously located at Sparta, Indiana.

⁷⁷ GAM, 1836-1839. Holman wrote in 1839: "Education is becoming generally diffused through the community. . . . Unless there is a corresponding increase in intelligence of our ministry, we shall fall still further below the state of general society, and our Gospel operations will be more and more confined to the less informed part of the community."

It was largely due to the work of President Chandler that the college gained acceptance as a part of the program of the missionary Baptists in Indiana. When Chandler's presidency came to an end in 1850, however, the school was so heavily in debt that a sheriff's sale for the disposal of the buildings and grounds was pending. The crisis was met with difficulty and it was two years before a new President could be secured. The college managed to continue without a break until very near the end of the Civil War.⁷⁸

Conclusion

We have found that the inception of the various missionary activities by Baptists within the state was the work not of organized bodies but of individual leaders who saw the necessity of pushing ahead vigorously in their program in spite of the opposition and flagging interest of many of their fellows. Focusing their attention on the crying needs to be met both within the church and in society generally, they discarded theological quibbling and the splitting of hairs on matters of ecclesiastical organization.

The opponents of the new methods were usually blind to the fact that religious institutions in frontier times were in process of formation, and that for a body to fail to keep pace with changing social conditions and demands inevitably would lead to death. The difference between the antimission forces among the Baptists and the promoters of benevolences was not primarily one of theological correctness, intelligence, or

⁷⁸ For the full account, see J. F. Cady, *Centennial History of Franklin College* (1934), chapters I-III. Hinckley did much for the school during the first four years, while Holman's monetary contributions surpassed that of any other individual.

sincerity. Basically it was a difference in viewpoint, the first being introspective, suspicious, and defensive, the other focusing its attention on tasks to be done. Without some such outward vision, the people of any age will perish.

CHAPTER V

CONSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF FRONTIER BAPTIST CHURCHES

Readers who are interested only in the narrative story of the history of the Indiana Baptists would do well to proceed immediately with chapter VI. The present chapter is descriptive in character. It deals with the organizational set-up of the local church bodies, their buildings and maintenance, their business methods and discipline, formal ordinances, and the interrelations of Baptist churches in annual Associations and otherwise. These practices persisted with little change in many places throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century. The manner of organizing new churches was treated in chapter I, and will not have to be reviewed in this connection.

Officers of the Church; the Pastor.

The officers of the local church were few in number, and were subject in all respects to the wishes of the congregation. A Moderator and a clerk, chosen annually, exercised executive authority over business affairs, while the pastor and the board of deacons supervised religious functions. The pastor was frequently chosen to be the Moderator; he was invariably an ordained person, and served for one year on a given call. The deacons were also ordained, although according to less rigid standards. They constituted a kind of repository of executive control over worship, disciplinary activities, and the financial affairs of the church, and frequently served for an in-

definite period of time.¹ The office of trustee was at first neither essential nor important. It served only to meet the legal requirements for property holding. Pastors often served from two to four congregations.² The honorary title of "elder" was loosely applied both to ordained brethren and to lay preachers, but seems to have had no special or technical significance.³

Capable pastors were frequently not to be had. The best preachers of the denomination were in demand far beyond their ability to comply. The reason for this state of affairs was not far to seek. It was in the selection and training of pastors that revivalist methods of recruitment failed most dismally. Many of the ablest ministers, such as Jesse Holman and Jesse Vawter, for example, were men of other professions, and were not ordained until past fifty years of age. Short pastorates with many gaps in between were the rule.⁴ The problem of incompetence facing many churches is reflected in the follow-

1 Second Silver Creek (Fourteen Mile Creek) CM, 1807-1836; Delphi CM, 1843-1846; Valparaiso CM, 1908. The ordination of deacons was later discontinued in many places. The principle of congregational supremacy was affirmed in characteristic fashion by the Butlerville church in 1870: "Since the date of the apostles, there is no higher ecclesiastical authority on earth than the congregated, worshiping church of Christ. . . . No conclave of Bishops, or any council appointed by themselves, or even their own officers have a right to lord it over the church."

2 See the minute books of Delphi, Vernon, Franklin churches.

3 The use of the title "elder" began among the Separate Baptists of Virginia, the term being borrowed from Presbyterian neighbors. It was a means of referring to preachers without implying any professional or clerical standing. A few churches rejected it as unauthorized by the Scriptures. See Stott, 41; Spencer, I, 485.

4 Gewehr points out (p. 184) that the Methodists and Presbyterians fared much better in recruiting younger leadership than did the Baptists. Bethel church (Sand Creek Association) had forty-three pastors during its first century, and lacked having one a fifth of the time.

ing statement issued by the White River Association:

"We believe that the churches are blameable in the treatment of their preachers in not correcting habitual errors, such as uncomely gestures, improper language, useless repetitions, etc. How often are we disagreeably harangued with the preachers apologizing for themselves . . . which likely are the effects of pride. . . . By reason of fear or disrespect the preacher seldom hears of his failings, though freely talked of by others. It is too frequently found that preachers imbibe a notion that because they possess the gifts of preaching, they should have the pre-eminence in churches, associations, etc., which is an error that ought to be corrected."⁵

The churches assumed control over prospective preachers by means of licenses which could be withheld or revoked for cause. Licenses were usually limited to the bounds of the local congregation until it was demonstrated that a candidate would be acceptable elsewhere. A time limit was frequently set. Thus the Sharon church agreed to "tolerate" a brother "for the space of four months in the bounds of the Church, provided there is no cause to call him to an Account sooner." If developments seemed to warrant it, the life of the license might be extended indefinitely and its scope broadened to include neighboring churches or the entire Association.⁶ Particular care was exercised in the restoration of ministers whose licenses had been previously recalled,

⁵ White River AM, 1838.

⁶ Starbird, *op. cit.*, p. 37; Sharon CM, March, 1824; Coffee Creek CM, 1823, 1828; Delphi CM, 1843; Columbus CM, 1852. The White River Association endorsed the following regulations in 1838: "Ministers . . . should never be licenced to preach out of the bounds of their respective churches, unless it is manifest that they will be generally received by sister churches. We believe the cause of religion has greatly suffered by preachers being willingly placed where they ought not to have been placed."

this action usually requiring the approval of a Council of neighboring ministers.⁷

The formal ordination of a licentiate was usually delayed until after he received his first pastoral call. In the case of a candidate of acknowledged ability, this might follow very soon, but the probationary period usually extended over an interim of several years. Many of the licensed preachers were never ordained.⁸ A number of instances can be found where the church sought out its promising talent and encouraged them officially to exercise their gifts as speakers.⁹ These examples were never as frequent, however, as those in which the candidate himself made application.¹⁰

Undoubtedly a principal factor contributing to the dearth of able ministers was the lack of inclination and capacity on the part of the churches to support them adequately. For the first three decades of the century almost no instances can be found where a church undertook any specific obligation toward its pastor. Some of them affirmed that every Christian had a duty to sustain a faithful ministry according to his ability, but there is no early case of any attempt to enforce this obligation. Some churches appointed an individual to receive the offerings of those who wished to contribute. A few went so far as to appeal directly for aid in behalf of the pastors. But such methods were highly unpopular,

7 White River AM, 1822. The Delphi church, in 1837-38, granted a man permission to preach for six months within the church only to exclude him for lying and swindling before the expiration of that period.

8 Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

9 Vernon CM, April and May, 1817. John Vawter was deliberately solicited and licensed on this occasion.

10 Columer CM, September, 1884, contain an apologetic tone: "If Bro. Gerrell Quick will give his life to the work of the preaching of the Gospel, that he will ever have the sympathy of the church."

and were frequently challenged. The Aurora church was probably the first in the state to agree to pay its pastor a regular stipend, in 1820. But the amount was only \$1.50 a month, and the practice was later abandoned. It was not until 1838 that the Baptist church of Indianapolis, for example, made itself responsible for paying a designated salary, and even then the congregation was obliged later to default.¹¹

Non-salary aids to pastors were common, but were never very considerable in amount. Congregations would frequently pay the necessary traveling expenses or ferriage charges for their preachers, or they might purchase an overcoat for him. Many instances can be found where they assisted him in the purchase of a farm or in the cultivation of his land.¹² But little pay was to be had. An agent of a Bible Society in northern Indiana reported in 1836 that he had not received fifteen dollars from the people for three years of preaching.¹³

The Church Buildings and Their Maintenance.

The erection and maintenance of a simple meeting house strained the financial resources of the average frontier congregation. Various make-shift methods were often resorted to. The Bethel church chose the expedient of "laying on each member so much labour." The Sharon church suggested that payments be made "either in corn, work, wheat, pork, or Cash."¹⁴ Even with such cooperation among the members it was often from two

¹¹ Minutes of Sharon (1818), Indianapolis (1825), (1838), Valparaiso (1840), Wirt (1833), Franklin (1833), churches; Sand Creek AM, 1871; Laughery AM, 1868. The salary of \$500 was pledged by the Indianapolis church in 1838.

¹² Bethel and Silver Creek CM; Stott 39-44; Vernon CM, 1816-22; Delphi CM, 1832-33.

¹³ Twelfth Annual Report of the Baptist General Tract Society.

¹⁴ Bethel CM, August, 1823; Sharon CM, October, 1814.

to a dozen years before a meeting house could be prepared. Meanwhile the monthly meetings were held at the homes of the various members. Since the site was usually donated it might be a number of years after the erection of the building before the trustees were elected and a legal title acquired.¹⁵

The earliest church meeting houses were small and rudely constructed. They ranged from 18 by 20 to 25 by 30 feet in size, and were made of round or hewn logs. They were often without glass in the window, and were, therefore, incapable of being used in cold weather. The puncheon floor was axe-hewn. Wide rails with peg-legs inserted below served as benches. Loose boards were laid overhead for the loft, and the roof was usually made of clapboards. Few of these log buildings were lathed or plastered, although the systematic "chinking and daubing" were regular annual assignments. In some of them a fireplace was built, the chimney being made of "cat and clay", a mixture of sticks and hardened mud. The door at one end was frequently hung on wooden hinges, and it opened on the single aisle which ran down the middle of the church. On a rough platform at the opposite end was a stand or pulpit. The men sat on one side of the house, and the women on the other.¹⁶

If the church organization prospered, they were not long satisfied with such inadequate accommodations. Eventually the buildings were sealed. Brick began to be used as early as 1826. Frequently the coöperation of the community was secured by preparing a more adequate structure capable of housing a school when it

¹⁵ Valparaiso (1838), Bethel (1822), (1823), (1827) CM; Sand Creek AM, 1873.

¹⁶ Memorandum of John Reece (1825); Sharon CM, 1818; Owen's Creek CM, 1823; Sand Creek AM, 1870; U. E. Smith, *History of Bethel Baptist Church*, MS.

was not in use for the services of the church. Conversely, where regular school buildings or court houses were available, these were often used for religious meetings. For the upkeep of the building the congregation frequently assessed male members roughly according to their abilities to contribute in work, produce, or money.

As a rule the first fixed expenditures of the church were for the paying of the sexton. He usually received from four to ten dollars a year for providing wood, candles, and janitor service. The entire annual operating budget frequently did not exceed ten dollars. Special offerings might be taken periodically to provide the elements of the Lord's Supper, to secure additional furniture, or perhaps to relieve the distress of the poor of the community.¹⁷

Business Methods and Discipline.

The business affairs of the churches were regulated by the Rules of Decorum adopted at the time of organization. They contained certain elementary principles of parliamentary law, outlining the duties of the Moderator and setting forth the general order of business and the procedure to be followed in matters of disciplinary action.

As presiding officer, the Moderator was charged with the responsibility of transacting business, preserving order, and inviting visiting brethren to seats in council. Matters of business were usually taken up in the following order: first, inquiry concerning the peace of the

17 Wirt CM, 1825-30; Vernon CM, 1820-22; Sharon, Graham, Mount Pleasant, Ebenezer, Coffee Creek, New Washington Minutes. There were comparatively few brick structures before the forties. The Indianapolis church assessed each male member twenty-five cents a year in 1822 and fifty cents in 1825, for current expenses.

church; second, the opening of the door for new members; third, consideration of unfinished business and matters referred to committees; and finally, new business. The Moderator could not vote except in case of a tie, but both he and visiting brethren present could participate in the deliberations. Members sometimes were not allowed to speak more than twice on a given topic without special permission, nor could any question be debated in the face of objection, except by consent of a majority of those present. Business meetings convened on a designated Saturday in each month, usually at 11 A. M. A quorum was sometimes placed as low as three male members.¹⁸

Prominent among the questions with which the rules were concerned was the matter of disciplinary action. Offenses were of three varieties. First were the problems of maintaining order, enforcing attendance at business meetings, and requiring compliance with the essential doctrines and the rules of the church. Then there were offenses of a public nature in violation of statute laws or in derogation of the ethical standards of the church. Finally, there were those private offenses of one individual against another which might operate to destroy the fellowship of the membership. Questions of order were usually enforceable by the Moderator and the deacons. It was strictly required that all should acknowledge the authority of the church. The two latter classes of offenses involved the bringing of a direct charge by one member against another, with the privilege of a hearing for the accused.¹⁹

18 Minutes of Sharon, Wirt, Vernon, Bethel, Morgantown, Columbus, Prairie Creek churches.

19 Refusal of members to submit to examination of alleged misconduct made them subject to immediate exclusion. Franklin CM, 1834-36.

The general legal basis for disciplinary procedure was found in several verses of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew:

“And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church; and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.”²⁰

No matter of complaint for private grievance could be entertained until it had been first treated according to this standard. With public offenses, these “Gospel steps” were not rigidly required, although it was frequently provided that one “bearing an evil report of his brother shall converse with him about it before he shall mention it to the church.” In any case of notorious misconduct for which public acknowledgment before the church was not made, the exclusion might be accomplished without formal dealings with the guilty party. On the other hand, a serious accusation, if unsubstantiated, might result in the exclusion of the false accuser for wantonly damaging a brother’s reputation.²¹

The procedure which the church followed in disciplinary cases was also well defined. The charge was usually lodged orally, frequently at the time when the peace of the church was under consideration, by one who had already taken the so-called “Gospel steps.” If

20 Matthew 18:15-17, *American Standard Version*.

21 New Washington CM, May, 19, 1827. After Thomas Lincoln had been subjected to an unfounded complaint by Nancy Grigsby in 1830, he was given the satisfaction of serving as Moderator of a committee that ruled adversely on a second accusation advanced by the same troublesome party. Little Pigeon CM, January-February, 1830.

a majority judged the complaint to be well enough founded to entertain the case, the accused person was temporarily suspended and a committee was appointed to cite him to answer the charge at the next meeting of the church. If the offending member failed to appear after a second or third call, he was excluded for "refusing to hear the church." If the accused should contest the charge, he was guaranteed a fair hearing with the privilege of introducing witnesses in his behalf. The congregation was both judge and jury although disputes might be referred to special committees for settlement. Sometimes a majority vote was sufficient for exclusion, but it usually called for the unanimous vote of those not directly interested in the case. Restoration invariably required a unanimous vote and it was often conditioned on acknowledgment of wrong.²²

The exercise of such disciplinary functions sometimes produced unfortunate consequences. Church rules frequently recognized the dangers by stipulating that speakers could refer to each other only by the title of "brother" and should not cast personal reflections upon any previous speaker. Cases involving misconduct invariably aroused a great deal of scandalous gossip with the result that outsiders were frequently excluded from the sessions. Sometimes such cases were summarily dismissed to avoid publicity. In important questions involving church leaders or technical considerations, the accused might ask that a council of outside brethren be called in to give their advice in order to prevent a division of the congregation. In many cases the church achieved the desired result of acknowledgment of misconduct, penitence, and reconciliation of the offending

²² Minutes of Wirt, Morgantown, Vernon, Delphi, Ebenezer, Columbus, Franklin churches; Sweet, 159-160.

member. Not infrequently brethren would set an example of contrition by bringing charges against themselves. But inevitably the disciplinary function was productive of a considerable amount of controversy and tale-bearing.²³

The necessity for discipline seemed, nevertheless, to be unquestionable. It was apparently the only way for the churches to maintain their moral standards amid the turbulent, untamed social conditions of the frontier. Furthermore, the marked dislike which the Baptists entertained for any connection with political authority made it a strict rule of most churches that members should not sue each other at law "before the ungodly."²⁴ It was, in fact, the clear realization of the sharp contrast between their ideal of brotherly Christian conduct and the surrounding world of passion, vice, and unbridled materialism that gave to the churches a measure of virility and dignity.

The cases of discipline found in the early records are both numerous and varied. The most common public offenses were intoxication, unseemly language, and sexual irregularities.²⁵ There were also minor charges of fighting, betting on shooting matches, Sabbath violation, lying, defrauding, dancing, participation in lotteries, and the like. Charges of entertaining heretical opinions are not frequent, perhaps because the offending brother could so easily shift his membership to a more congenial

²³ Sand Creek AM and Sharon CM. An example follows: "Brother John Reace [the Moderator] came forward with complete account against himself for being out by drinking too much spirited liquor and after relating his distress on that he had done the affair of such conduct, which gave satisfaction to the church." Second Silver Creek CM, April 1, 1814, February, 1824, and July, 1826.

²⁴ Ebenezer CM, 1822; Stott, 45; Silver Creek CM, 1823.

²⁵ New Washington CM, 1811-1826.

atmosphere. The action of the church in such cases usually took the form of excluding the individual for joining another church.²⁶ Private complaints included domestic questions such as wife-beating, neglect of children, and laxity in controlling them. One church advised a father not to act rashly in giving his daughter a promised whipping for joining the Methodist church.²⁷ Many questions of civil character also appear, such as denial of contract, failure to pay for land, wrongful occupancy of houses or land, abuse of another's live stock, the discounting of notes, and departure from the community without paying one's creditors.²⁸

In rare instances, charges were preferred by parties outside the local church.²⁹ When a member of Hebron church presented a complaint for breach of contract against a member of Sharon church, the latter body informed the offender that if he neglected for seven days longer to fulfill the contract, the offended brother "would be at liberty to use the force of the law."³⁰ The Maria Creek church on another occasion notified a Kentucky church that one of the members of the latter body living near Maria Creek was using profane language.³¹

26 Stott, 38-45; First Prairie Creek and Vernal CM, 1835 and 1824. The Franklin church cited a blacksmith for shoeing a traveller's horse on Sunday, in 1837.

27 Stott, 55; Sharon CM.

28 Sharon CM, 1816, 1817, 1818, 1822, 1824; First Prairie Creek CM, 1834, 1835, 1840.

29 Owen's Creek CM, December, 1805, July, 1807; Stott, 41-42. Isaac McCoy secured the exclusion of a member of Owen's Creek church before he himself would become affiliated with it.

30 Sharon CM, February, 1829.

31 Stott, 54. The following ruling dates from a minute of 1821 of the Sharon Church: "Brother Thomas Hodges . . . Stated that two Members of another Church owed him a sum of money and had Delayed payment the church Advise

The churches were not blind to the perils inherent in the self-righteous pride which church discipline encouraged. The following significant exhortation is taken from an early minute of the Laughery Association:

“Our passions require a most vigilant guard, not only those of anger, hatred, malice, envy, revenge, etc., but more especially pride, vanity, self-love, and self-applause. . . . They ascend into the pulpit, they glide into the closet, they creep into all our thoughts and wind themselves around all our actions. . . . Therefore, watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong, for blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.”³²

Ordinances and Practices of the Early Churches.

The most characteristic ordinance of the Baptist church was baptism by immersion. This was the principal feature of the initiatory ceremony required for entrance into the church. Some of the churches were so strict in their demands that they rejected all “alien baptism” and insisted upon rebaptizing even those who came to them from other immersionist groups.³³ Only an ordained minister could administer baptism. Churches usually postponed the observance of the ceremony until a number of candidates were ready. Large crowds would often assemble on the bank of the stream to witness the event. There is incontestable evidence that the ice of streams was sometimes broken for the occasion. The officiating minister was usually provided with an

Brother Hodges to try to get them to Confess Judgments for the money and if they refuse then to enter a Complaint to the Church they belong to.”

32 Laughery AM, 1820. By Jesse L. Holman.

33 Little Pigeon AM, 1824, 1826. The Vernal church and several others refused to go to this extreme; see minute of July, 1826. Immersion by a Methodist was invalid in Flat Rock Association in 1825.

extra shirt and overalls to be used in the baptismal service.³⁴

In connection with the ordinance of baptism a subordinate practice was introduced by some groups, known as "the laying-on-of-hands." It had originated in the East among the so-called "Six-Principle Baptists" (this being the sixth), and had been used by many churches in Kentucky. It was a kind of consecration ceremony following the administration of baptism. The minister present would place his right hand on the head of each candidate and engage in solemn prayer for his faithfulness. The ceremony seems never to have been widely practiced in Indiana in this form.³⁵ It survived generally in the ordination ceremony for deacons and ministers, but was not regarded, even here, as an indispensable ordinance.³⁶ Officiating ministers instructed newly baptized persons in their duties as members of the church. The entire congregation closed the ceremony by marching by to extend the "right hand of fellowship."³⁷

In regard to the second ordinance, the Lord's Supper, it was generally held that participation in it should follow, not precede, baptism. The more narrow the rule of the church in regard to baptism, therefore, the more restricted would be its practice of communion. The Fourteen Mile church refused to allow its pastor to administer the ordinance in the nearby Silver Creek Baptist church in 1809 because of minor creedal differences. Immersion by Dunkards or Disciples was

34 Pratt, I, 46; two were here baptized outdoors in a temperature below zero. See also Sharon CM, September, 1817.

35 Spencer, I, 181-182; Sharon church practiced it for about a year (1816).

36 Stott, 46; Silver Creek CM, June 23, 1825.

37 Spencer I, 486; Sharon CM, November, 1817.

usually unacceptable, and practically all would exclude non-immersionist groups from communion. It sometimes occurred within a specific congregation that personal dislike or want of fellowship would influence local members to refuse to participate in the Lord's Supper at all, a practice sufficiently widespread at one time to invite the special attention of the Silver Creek Association.³⁸

Examples of more liberal practices with regard to communion can also be found. Coffee Creek Association, for example, repeatedly suggested that the Lord's supper was "worthy of being received by all the followers of the Lamb." Some churches explicitly protested against the restrictive policy.³⁹ Actual practice varied widely. So also did the frequency of holding the service. It might be celebrated two, four, or six times a year. In some churches no regular practice was pursued but a special vote taken on each occasion.⁴⁰

A few other habits appear to have attained almost sacramental significance among the churches. Days of prayer and fasting were often designated in connection with a special occasion, such as the ordination of a promising young minister, or on regular dates such as the first Monday of January. The practice of foot-washing was never widely practiced by the Baptists of In-

38 Fourteen Mile Creek CM, December, 1809; Little Pigeon AM, 1824-26; Silver Creek AM, August, 1823. The White River Association ruled as follows in 1826, with reference to persons baptized by Christians but bearing letters from Baptist churches: "If others have received members contrary to the Divine rule, we do not, out of tenderness to them, partake of their evil deeds by receiving them again."

39 Coffee Creek AM, 1837; Vernal CM, 1821, 1824.

40 Coffee Creek, New Washington, Madison, Vernal, Val-paraiso, Sharon, Bloomfield CM.

diana. It was usually declared not to be an ordinance of the church.⁴¹

"Protracted meetings" were customarily held once a year, but oftener if interest seemed to warrant it. The meetings probably differed little from ordinary services except in their continuous character and increased emotional intensity. Penitent individuals seeking salvation were usually obliged to discuss the exercises of their minds before the church. If the congregation was not satisfied, the seeker was urged to continue his search, while the prayers and exhortations of the membership were directed to his aid. Withal, there was much of weeping, rejoicing, handshaking, and fellowship. Successful revivals were times long to be remembered. This institution, became deeply embedded in the traditions of the church.⁴²

The following letter, which appeared in *The Regular Baptist* for April, 1839, illustrates the method by which such meetings were sometimes planned and the kind of call which was frequently made upon the more able of the Baptist preachers of the state.

"Adams County, Indiana, March 26m 1839.

"Dear Brethren:—The Fort Wayne Regular Baptist Church being destitute of a Pastor, and wishing to have a protracted meeting, to commence on Thursday the 27th of June next, at 2 o'clock P. M., and by order of the church I am requested to take measures to engage ministers to attend; . . . I avail myself of this method to accomplish that object.

⁴¹ Silver Creek, Sharon, Vernal, Bethel, Wirt, Flat Rock, Mt. Moriah, Edwardsport CM. Some churches permitted foot-washing, but few definitely practiced it. Of other ceremonies originating in the East, such as love-feasts, anointing with oil, etc., the records reveal no trace.

⁴² Valparaiso CM, 1840, 1855; First Prairie Creek CM, 1838; Spencer, I, 692-694.

"Therefore the following Brethren are earnestly and affectionately invited to attend the above contemplated meeting; viz: J. L. Holman, William Reese, T. Hill Jr., A. R. Hinckley, G. Minor, William Corbin, Geo. C. Chandler, William M. Pratt, and T. W. Haynes.

"The above time was concluded on as it will include the fifth Sunday in the month, and of course will not interfere with any regular monthly meeting. Dear Brethren, as there is great need of ministerial aid in the above mentioned church, it is hoped that you will attend without fail; and no appointment will be published until we have the promise of ministers to attend. You will therefore write immediately to brother Fairfield, the clerk of the above church, and give information you will attend. Direct to Fort Wayne, and be sure to come prepared to continue as long as the interest of the meeting may require it. . . . [sic.]

ROBERT TISDALE."

Relations with Other Baptist Churches.

The practice of the churches which served most effectively to unify the denomination as a whole was that of transferring membership by means of church letters. The letters were usually stereotyped in form, differing from each other only in the details of the brief doctrinal summary which usually served as a sort of preamble. The following one is typical:

"The Baptised church of Christ in Sempronius Cayuga County, Holding the Doctrin of Unconditional Election, Perticular redemption, Effectual Vocation, Justification alone by the Imputed righteousness of Christ, Joint communion, Baptism only by Immertion and the final Perseveriance of Saints in Grace to Glory, etc.—

"This may certify to whom it may concern that our Beloved Brother Samuel Marsh is a member in good standing in this church and as such we recommend him to any church of our faith and order and when joined to another

then dismiss from us, done by order and in behalf of the church, This 30th day of May, 1818.

Ezekiel Sayles, Church Clerk."⁴³

The preamble, guarded against the acceptance of the letter by churches not in agreement with the doctrines set forth. The insertion of such creedal statement seems to have been continued only until the 1840's.⁴⁴

In the reception of new members, the churches were expected to honor the disciplinary actions of sister congregations as well as their letters of recommendation. Those excluded from one church were not to be received by another without investigation of the charges. Persistence in such a course would give the original church cause for complaint before the Association to which the offending church belonged. Even if the individual in point confessed his faults and sought forgiveness of a new organization, the consent of the excluding church was usually sought before he was received. In the event of a serious difference of opinion, a council might be assembled to hear the evidence and to make recommendations on the question.⁴⁵

The granting of letters to departing members was a matter of routine business unless objections were made. Cause must be shown why letters should not be granted. If letters were sought by those long removed

⁴³ *Holman Correspondence*; Sweet (244) has several examples.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Practice varied considerably. The Second Silver Creek church in 1812 withdrew a letter presented by a former member to a church of a slightly different order. The Maria Creek church on the other hand received members from the New Lights without question in 1812, while the Delphi church accepted a Presbyterian sister by letter in 1843 and the Vernon church a Methodist in 1845. See Church Minutes and Stott, 55.

⁴⁵ Curry's Prairie AM 1876, 1877, 1879; Valparaiso CM, May 1859; First Church, Indianapolis, CM, April-May, 1858.

from the community, a recommendation from the church with which they proposed to unite was often required. Due to the difficulties involved in such procedure, however, the custom was widely practiced of receiving individuals, lacking letters, on the basis of their experience.⁴⁶

Associational Relationships.

The Association was the one institution which challenged the principle of the complete autonomy of the local church. It represented, in fact, a necessary compromise between the ideal of congregational independence, and the need for facilities to promote wider fellowship, cooperation, and common council. Although the general nature of the Association was pretty well fixed before the settlement of Indiana began, the problem of meeting the demands of particular situations inevitably introduced considerable variety into their character and practice.⁴⁷

New Associations were organized at will to suit the convenience of the various churches in a given area. Many of them were instituted spontaneously without assistance from an older body. Thus the messengers of eight churches met at the Zoar meeting house on Christmas day in 1844 to consider organizing a new Association. After an exchange of opinions by those present "it was unanimously agreed to organize the aforesaid Churches into a New Association by the name of Sand Creek." They appropriated, then, the Bond of

⁴⁶ Sharon CM, February, 1815, August, 1816; Valparaiso CM, 1857. Thomas Lincoln's letter was unsuccessfully contested by an offended member of the Grigsby family in 1830. —Little Pigeon CM.

⁴⁷ Mode, 131; Starbird, 5-13. The Philadelphia Association began about 1688 and was early extended into Virginia. Those in the Carolinas and Rhode Island began in the 1750's.

Union, the Articles of Faith, and the Rules of Decorum of the Madison Association, fixed their time of meeting for the following year on the third Saturday in August at 11 A. M. at the Brush Creek Church. They also elected a Moderator, and chose by private ballot the elder who should preach the opening sermon at the next meeting.⁴⁸ On other occasions the practice might be quite different. The Little Pigeon Association not only secured the previous sanction of both Wabash and Goshen (Kentucky) Associations for its organization, but four visiting members from those bodies gave their final approval and recognition to the action taken.⁴⁹

New member churches might be received into the Association, upon application, by unanimous vote. Unless they brought letters of dismissal from older recognized Associations, they must, however, submit evidence of their proper organization and secure the approval of their Articles of Faith. Churches were under no obligation to join any Association and had the privilege of withdrawing at any time. As long as they were members they could be held to account for failure to represent themselves at annual meetings.⁵⁰ The Association also reserved the right to control its own sessions and exclude churches adjudged by majority vote to be out of order in either faith or practice. But, aside from such matters, the body had no power whatever to coerce the action of any member church.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Sand Creek AM, 1844.

⁴⁹ Little Pigeon AM, 1822.

⁵⁰ Valparaiso CM, April 8, 1843; Little Pigeon AM, 1824 and 1828; Butlerville CM, August 1824.

⁵¹ Curry's Prairie AM, 1834; Sweet, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-57. The Rules invariably stated that the Association was not to "lord it over God's heritage or to infringe on any of the internal rights of the churches." For more than thirty years the Bethel church voted annually whether or not to represent itself in the Brownstown Association Minutes, 1852-1885.

The annual meeting of the Associations were held in the dry season of the late summer or fall, when roads were passable. They lasted for several days, beginning on Friday or Saturday and extending sometimes until Monday. Friday and Monday might be used for business, and Saturday and Sunday for preaching. Each church sent several messengers to bear its letter and contributions for the minutes, and to represent it officially, but all individuals who were interested were at liberty to attend the sessions. Great crowds often assembled, the situation approximating somewhat the early camp meetings of Kentucky. Business might be in process of transaction in the church building while preaching continued uninterruptedly in a neighboring grove.⁵²

The order of business was pretty definitely fixed. After the messengers and letters had been received, the body usually proceeded to the appointments of committees on program, new officers, queries, corresponding letter, resolutions, and obituaries. The reports of Corresponding bodies were then received and visitors seated. At a later business session the reports of the various committees were heard and adopted, applications of churches for membership considered, queries discussed, and new business undertaken.⁵³ In the meantime there was much singing, preaching, exhortation, and prayer. The meetings provided exceptional opportunities for mutual encouragement of the struggling congregations. They seem to have been thoroughly enjoyable occasions.

⁵² Starbird, pp. 64-84. The number of messengers were from two to four, with apparently no apportionment made. Valparaiso CM May, 1884; Vernal CM, October 1818, November 1822.

⁵³ Curry's Prairie AM 1834, 1846, 1872.

Invitations for entertaining the next year's meeting were never lacking.⁵⁴

Sometimes additional Associational meetings were held within the year, a practice more common among Kentucky Baptists than in Indiana. The Little Pigeon Association, for instance, regularly held two or more such meetings in the spring and early summer. Other groups of churches later devoted every fifth Sunday to an Associational gathering.⁵⁵

The member churches, but not individuals, had the privilege of addressing queries to the Association. The question was supposed to have been debated previously in the local church. The Association could demur if it chose to do so, especially if taking action threatened to involve it in a serious dispute. As a rule such bodies were free with their advice. Some expressed opinions, for instance, on such subjects as "alien baptism," missions, or the importance of foot-washing. They might warn against granting the use of the meeting house to travelling ministers who lacked proper credentials. Occasionally they declared that particular preachers were not trustworthy. It was often recommended that more care be exercised in the reception of new members, in fostering their growth in grace, or in the application of discipline. It was to the Association that complaint against a member church could be brought for receiving individuals excluded by the protesting church. Refusal to comply with the "advice" of the Association in important questions of order might even result in exclusion. Frequently the message of the Association

54 *Ibid.*, 1834; Sweet, 54-57. Church letters invariably expressed joy that the time for the Association had returned.

55 Spencer, I, 487; Little Pigeon AM, 1821 ff; Franklin CM, September, 1832.

was cast in the form of a Circular Letter, printed in the minutes of the session.⁵⁶

The Association, however, was not a representative governing body comparable to a Presbyterian Assembly. The messengers acted solely upon their own responsibility as a body of Christian men, and were in no strict sense the delegates of the churches. The individual church itself remained the highest ecclesiastical authority, and it possessed, in theory, no powers which it might delegate to such a body.⁵⁷ Associations were therefore inclined to be cautious in assuming any responsibilities of an administrative character. Frequently they advised that a special council be assembled for the purpose of settling disputes. Occasionally an Association could not avoid interference in a local quarrel, if rival factions should each send separate messengers to its annual sessions. But the general tendency throughout the Western country was to restrict Associational authority, and to avoid as far as possible making decisions which might impair the fellowship of the member churches. Some bodies even declined to take steps for supplying preaching to destitute places because of alleged lack of authority.⁵⁸ This tendency was partly due to the influence of the missionary controversy. Church councils, on the other hand, came to play a relatively important part in frontier ecclesiastical polity.

⁵⁶ Laughery, Sand Creek, Little Pigeon, Curry's Prairie, Coffee Creek, Elkhorn (Kentucky) AM, Sweet, 477, 480, 484.

⁵⁷ Laughery AM, 1865.

⁵⁸ Little Pigeon AM, 1822, 1830; Sand Creek AM, 1850; Bethel CM, August, 1833. White River Association was definitely challenged in connection with its interference of the affairs of Vernal Church. The tendency among Eastern Associations was for their powers to expand. See R. A. Chapman, *Development of Baptist Associations During the Colonial History* (1920), 21ff.

Church Councils.

Councils which were assembled from neighboring churches performed three distinct functions. Perhaps the most frequent early use was in connection with the organization of new churches, as was explained in chapter one. Such a body might include a score of visiting brethren, laymen as well as elders.⁵⁹ More difficult was their task of deciding disputes within a church or controversies between various churches. A body assembled for this purpose could include laymen as well as ministers, and was usually drawn from fewer churches than were included in the more general invitations to assist in organizing new bodies. The problems encountered were usually those growing out of disciplinary procedure and called for much fairness and tact. The records reveal many differences which were successfully terminated by this means. Coffee Creek church participated in ten such councils within a period of a little more than twenty years.⁶⁰ It was in this particular respect that the Associations were relieved of many embarrassing situations, as explained above.

The third task for which the council might be called was for the ordination of ministers and deacons. This was, during the middle half of the century, by far the most numerous function performed. It was also the most formal in character.⁶¹ Only chosen brethren who themselves had been ordained could usually participate in this solemn procedure. Frequently as many

59 Minutes of Delphi, Wirt, Fourteen Mile, Vernon Churches.

60 Coffee Creek CM, 1827-1854; Sharon, Ebenezer, Vernon, Morgantown, Valparaiso CM, 1818-1872.

61 Coffee Creek church participated in 32 such councils in the course of 28 years, 1822-1850. Of these 28 were for minister, 4 for deacon ordination.

as eight or ten churches were represented, the invitation often being extended by a church which had recently invited the brother in question to become its pastor. One brother of the local church was a member of the council, and presented the candidate for their examination⁶²

The procedure was clearly defined. After a Moderator and another member to assist him with the questioning were chosen, the candidate for ordination was asked to relate his "experience in a work of grace," his call to the ministry, and his views of Bible doctrine. At the close of the examination the council retired to deliberate upon the fitness of the candidate. A unanimous vote was usually required. The ceremony was concluded at a later session, opened by a preaching service. Then would follow the prayer of ordination, during which the visiting elders gathered around the candidate, placing their right hands upon his head.⁶³ A member of the Council then gave a solemn charge to the candidate as to his responsibilities. This procedure was sometimes followed by giving a corresponding charge to the church. The ceremony was concluded, as usual, by the extension of the right hand of fellowship.⁶⁴

In the case of deacons, the examination was more brief, covering only questions concerned with the duties of that office. The ordination of deacons was often accomplished by the local church without extending any

62 At a later date, the ministers of other Protestant churches of the vicinity were sometimes permitted to attend as a courtesy. Columbus CM, June, 1889.

63 Harbert's Creek church voted in 1827 that "It is not proper to ordain a minister or a deacon without the laing on of hands."

64 Bethel CM, December, 1845, May, 1856; Columbus CM, June, 1889; Kingsbury, Vernon CM.

invitations to visiting brethren. It was sometimes entirely omitted.⁶⁵ Councils were sometimes called to confirm the action taken by a church in dropping a man from the ministry for un-Christian conduct or heterodox opinions.⁶⁶

The decision of the Council on any question was usually final, although occasions are not lacking where a church defied such ruling. The result of one instance was to split the congregation, and to invite a shameful law suit over the possession of the property of the church.⁶⁷ On another occasion the Union Association, with equally unfortunate results, attempted to adjudicate a difference arising over a holiness Free Methodist preacher occupying a Baptist church within their bounds.⁶⁸

The place of the council in the polity of the Baptist churches was, therefore, well established in practice, although resort to it was much less frequent at the close of the century than in the earlier decades.⁶⁹

It is important to recognize that the prevailing institutional practices of frontier Baptist churches developed spontaneously as the crystalization of accepted practice. They partook of the character of positive law.

65 Coffee Creek CM, 1822-50; Fourteen Mile Creek CM, 1807-36. Some early churches considered a deacon disqualified if he became a magistrate of the civil government. But many elders held such positions.

66 Mt. Gilead (Johnson County) CM, January and February, 1849.

67 Morgantown CM, 1896-1898. The majority faction in this case dissolved the council, and by vote of the church authorized and ordained the man in question to preach and to administer the sacraments.

68 Union AM, 1890-1891. The congregation was sharply split, and the authority of the Association greatly impaired.

69 Vernon church from 1874 to 1910 received but four invitations to councils, all of them for ministerial ordinations; Columbus Minutes, 1897-1903, reveal proportionally few.

There were no *Institutes* of Calvin to guide the congregations, nor any episcopal authority by which direction could be given. In this process, therefore, one can witness the operation of indigenous democratic processes, associated with a most emphatic assertion of the separation of church and state.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MISSIONARY BAPTIST COMMUNION

The Fruits of Depression.

The economic prostration which developed within Indiana after 1839 consequent upon financial panic and the necessary abandonment of an extravagant program of public works constituted a water-shed in religious trends as well as in other aspects of social life. Before the collapse, Jacksonian partisans were in the ascendancy, mouthing provincial prejudices against New England leadership whether political or religious. The Baptist communion in particular had been too busy quarreling over predestination and the dangers to religious liberty inherent in missionary benevolences to apply the liberty of which they were so jealous to defensible social ends. In vain does one look for any protest from the churches against the orgy of land speculation, of unsound banking, of peculation in public funds, of neglect to provide facilities for public education, which had led the commonwealth into the ditch.¹ But with depression ever deepening, soberness and self-criticism were in order, and the advocates of a cooperative program of religious and moral training were finally able to secure a hearing.²

1 J. B. McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*. 8 vols. (New York, 1883-1913), VI, 324, 346-48, 530-531; VII, 18, 22-3; Esarey, I, 525.

2 Spencer, I, 697.

An immediate result of the change of atmosphere was the development, for the first time in two decades, of a widespread revival of interest in religion. The churches of the Indianapolis Association, for example, increased their total membership seventy per cent in 1839-40. Laughery Association reported annual accession of 339 in 1843, while Madison Association realized 840 additions in 1842-43. Similar gains could be cited elsewhere. Successful revivalist technique was careful to avoid all question of religious controversy in order to focus the entire emphasis upon warning sinners and re-proving backsliders.³ The tangible results of such methods both in membership gains and in increased vitality were effective in refuting any lingering wish among all except the die-hards to continue the polemic controversy of the previous decade.

Another concomitant of the depression was the vogue of premillennial speculation on the approaching end of the world and the imminence of Christ's second coming. In contrast to the optimistic millennial expectations voiced by Alexander Campbell a decade earlier, the agitation in the forties was rooted in dismal pessimism concerning the fate of society. Only the direct intervention by God could remedy the ills of the world. Calvinistic groups were the first ones to be seriously affected, but as the gloom of the depression deepened, interest in this fascinating form of religious speculation became general throughout Indiana. Flat Rock Association de-

³ One Daniel Palmer wrote to Judge Holman (Feb. 18, 1840), suggesting other approved methods as follows: two ministers should always cooperate, enlisting the assistance of the entire congregation in singing and exhortation; mourners should be invited to come forward only if it appeared that several would actually come; any religious excitement that developed should be prolonged as long as possible.

clared in 1839 that the judgment day was near, and a spokesman of the General Association predicted in 1840 that the fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel was at hand.

The premillennial agitation in the West inevitably made contact with the widely advertised predictions of William Miller of New York state concerning the date of the approaching advent, which were causing great stir throughout New England and the Middle Atlantic states at the same time.⁴ Without attempting to essay, on the meager evidence available, the precise effect of the Millerite movement among Indiana Baptists, it can be pointed out that its periodicals attained a total circulation of more than a million copies in 1842, not counting a vast number of tracts.⁵ The hard winter of 1842-43 and certain disturbances among the heavenly bodies contributed their influence to heighten the excitement. The agitation also fitted into the current revivalist mood. One critical observer in Lafayette alleged in 1843 that "every means have been used . . . amongst these scientific preachers to frighten people to get religion."⁶ A discussion of the signs of the second coming was an important item of the agenda of a Convention of Western

4 Miller selected a date in March, 1843 (later postponed to March, 1844 and October, 1844) as the end of the age, basing his calculations on the 2300 days mentioned in Daniel's vision, chapter 8. As the time approached, many of his followers wound up their worldly affairs and prepared for the rapture. McMaster (VII, 136-39) reports numerous cases in insanity, suicide, and cessation of economic activity in the Eastern states. Three adventist sects eventually developed from the movement.

5 The best discussion which the writer has found is an unpublished manuscript by R. E. E. Harkness, *Social Origins of the Millerite Movement* (University of Chicago, 1927), 1-35, and chapter III; McMaster's account (VII, 134-39) places the original date in April, 1843.

6 *Western Predestinarian Baptist*, April 15, 1843.

Baptists at Cincinnati in May, 1840.⁷ The agitation in the Ohio valley reached a climax at a mammoth tent meeting at Louisville held in August, 1844, on the eve of the final date selected by Miller. It was accompanied by emotional extravagances reminiscent of the camp meetings of earlier times.⁸

The calendar alone guaranteed that the issue of the second coming would be a passing one. The days arrived and nothing happened. Pessimism began to lift with the gradual return of more prosperous times. Popular enthusiasm shifted abruptly to manifest destiny (the reannexation of Texas and the reoccupation of Oregon) with the election of President Polk in the fall of 1844. Criticism of Miller's predictions on the part of the Baptist leadership in Indiana preceded the final deadline date by at least two years. A report on the topic made before the General Association in 1842 deplored the current excitement and suggested the conveniently distant date of 2000 A. D. as more nearly the proper time.⁹ One of the leading Baptist periodicals of the West attempted an extended refutation of Miller's prophecy during the same year.¹⁰ John M. Peck was typical of others who abandoned the attempt to revise Miller's calculations and condemned the doctrine itself. The following is quoted from his diary:

"I regard this doctrine of a personal reign of Christ on earth after the present inhabitants are destroyed . . . as

7 Babcock, 290-91, 306. John M. Peck was so impressed on this occasion that for several years thereafter he became "an enamoured student of the prophecies."

8 McMaster, VII, 139.

9 GAM, 1842. The writer's skepticism was attributable in part to the failure of Campbell's earlier predictions to materialize.

10 *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Chronicle*, 1842, pp. 184-188.

exceedingly dishonorable to the son of God in his mediatorial kingdom. The fair representation in regard to these men is, that finding the impossibility of converting and reforming the world with all their intense and alarming messages, they therefore conclude that it must be destroyed."¹¹

The revivalist enthusiasm played out about the same time, not again to reappear until the early fifties.¹²

Whether or not the fruits of the depression were good, the travail of the period of the early forties at least gave birth to an opportunity for the Baptists to proceed with the task of building a wider program of cooperation within the denomination. Said a wise spokesman of the Sand Creek Association:

"And let us all guard against getting up preambles, motions, and passing resolutions, so as to create divisions, affect our peace, weaken our strength, and check our prosperity. . . .

The Baptists should be the last people in the world to devour one another. Remember what we have suffered for conscience sake, . . . and let the history of our past sufferings from others deter us from the first attempt at division and crimination, exclusion and judgment of one another, because of honest differences about the best plans of carrying out the Saviour's command to preach the Gospel to every creature. There is no heresy in this, nor immoral conduct. . . . We know in part and we prophesy in part, and the one who sees most will be the most humble, and exercise the most forbearance."¹³

¹¹ Babcock, 306-12.

¹² Spencer, I, 687. The Sand Creek Association realized an average of less than twenty accessions per year from 1845 to 1849. This number was tripled during the four years from 1850 to 1853. Similarly, Madison Association church realized an increase of less than forty-five annually from 1844 to 1850, recovering to more than 100 annually from 1851 to 1856.

¹³ Sand Creek AM, 1852. Similarly the White Lick Association had declared in 1840: "The selfish man lays claim to infallibility, and the multitude of such claimants causes the discord that prevails in the human society."

A Shift in the Center of Gravity.

The same decade which witnessed the discontinuance of open controversy over missionary question¹⁴ saw also a significant shift in the center of gravity of Baptist influence to the northern half of the state. Many of the people who migrated to this area came from New York and the New England states, where the anti-mission furor had scarcely been felt. The struggling Baptist churches of the newly settled region were, as a rule, only too glad to welcome outside assistance.¹⁵ Even those Baptists who migrated northward from communities where prejudice had been strong found it easier to accept the missionary principle when removed to new locations. Home missionaries like William Pratt played a prominent role in the organization of churches extending over a wide area.¹⁶

The rapidity of the appearance of Baptist churches across northern Indiana can be illustrated by the citation of the names of the new Associations formed. Five new Baptist Associations were organized along the course of the Wabash river, from 1833 to 1840.¹⁷ Three others appeared along the Michigan border from 1836 to 1845.¹⁸ Judson and Weasaw Associations in the north

14 The ruling of the Indianapolis church in 1839 granting complete freedom of conscience in both thought and practice with regard to missions is indicative of the trend.

15 The early minutes of the Huntington and Elkhart River Associations during the forties reveal that only one-third of the churches had pastors, and that the congregations averaged thirty or less in membership. Many were dependent on missionary assistance.

16 He organized churches at Mishawaka, Logansport, Lafayette, Attica, and assisted in numerous other localities.

17 Extending upstream in order were the Curry's Prairie (1833), Freedom (1840), Tippecanoe (1833), Huntington (1841), and Salamonie (1840).

18 These were Northern (1836), Northeastern (1841), and Elkhart River (1845).

central area were organized in 1848 and 1853 respectively. The Monticello Association declared itself to be an auxiliary of the General Association at the time of organization, 1859.¹⁹ Each of these new Associations indicated the presence of from a dozen to eighteen member churches.

The new Associations that appeared in southern Indiana during the same period were made up either of churches who had withdrawn from Primitive Baptist affiliations²⁰ or who had separated amicably from over-large bodies.²¹ In almost every instance, these new groups of churches were tolerant of progressive missionary measures, and tended, therefore, to balance the dead weight of conservative influence in southern Indiana.

One of the significant results of the contact with New England Baptists was the acceptance of the so-called New Hampshire Confession of Faith by a large number of the Indiana churches. Formulated by the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire in the early thirties, this statement was carefully non-committal on every point touching the Calvinistic emphasis. Thus

19 Harmony Association (1864), an offshoot of Judson Association, and Ft. Wayne Association, from Tippecanoe, (1868) complete the list. Tippecanoe was also the mother of Huntington and Weasaw Associations. Freedom Association came from churches formerly in the White Lick group, and some of the Elkhart River churches were at one time in the Northern Association. See Stott, 169-287.

20 In this group were Bethel (1837), Bloomington, later called Bedford, (1842), and White Water Valley (1852). Primitive Baptist churches withdrew from the Little Pigeon Association in 1842.

21 These were Brownstown (1835), Sand Creek (1843), Long Run (1850), Evansville (1850), Mount Zion (1855 possibly 1848 or 1857), and Friendship (1856). A Davis County Association apparently functioned from 1845 to 1857. See Stott, 202-11, 229-63; Flat Rock AM, 1856.

Article VI on the Freeness of Salvation used the following words:

"That the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel. . . . Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth except his own voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

Article IX declared that:

"Election is the gracious purpose of God according to which he regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all means in connection with the end; . . . that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree."²²

This new creedal statement received very wide acceptance. The Huntington church adopted it *verbatim* at the time of its organization in 1841, including also as one of its rules of decorum that it was the duty of the church to support the ministry. The Little Pigeon Association at the opposite end of the state approved the same creed in 1843, after the Primitive Baptist churches had withdrawn from its communion. Similar action was taken by churches as widely scattered as Bloomfield, Bloomington, Vernon, Middlefork, Columbus, and the churches of the Elkhart River Association. The Publication Society incorporated this creed in the *Baptist Church Manual* published in the fifties, which was readily received throughout the northern part of the state.²³

²² W. J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia 1911), 299-307. This creed was revised by an editorial secretary of the American Baptist Publication Society, J. Newton Brown, in 1853. Two articles were added to the original and slight changes were made in the wording. In Article VI, the words "inherent depravity" were added. Article XVIII reflected the premillennarian emphasis of the time saying that "the end of the world is approaching: that at the last day Christ will descend from Heaven and raise the dead from the grave."

²³ *Ibid.*, Huntington CM, 1841; Little Pigeon AM 1843;

Even in Churches where the New Hampshire Confession was not officially adopted, the retreat from predestinarian principles was indicated by the acceptance of such statements as the following:

"We believe the Gospel to be addressed to the whole world, and that the preaching, Christ tasted death for every man, should be no bar to communion."

"We believe that true believers constitute the elect of God, and unbelievers the non-elect, and that all men are called upon the Gospel to repent believe, and be baptized."

"We do most seriously consider the preaching of repentance and the invitations of the Gospel to all characters of men to be one of the most interesting subjects of the Gospel ministry."²⁴

The Initiation of Missionary Effort on a Local Scale.

The general cessation of opposition to missionary endeavor as such did not mean that the Baptist churches of Indiana enlisted in any large numbers in the work of the Home Mission Society or even of the General Association of the state.²⁵ Recourse was had instead to local missionary undertakings on an Associational basis. The White Lick Association led the way in 1841 by selecting a committee for domestic missions. Indianap-

Bloomfield, 1869; Vernon, 1853; Bloomington, 1857; Middlefork, 1851; Elkhart River AM, 1846; Columbus, 1852; Blue River, 1847; Burns City, 1867. Vernon considered annulling its creed in 1849. The Valparaiso church voted in 1860 to accept the creed contained in the *Manual*.

²⁴ Morgantown CM, 1849; Butlerville CM, 1870; Otter Creek CM, 1848. The first statement is the one most commonly found.

²⁵ Only a few bodies like the Bethel Association which the McCoys organized in 1837 accorded immediate support to every phase of missionary endeavor. Such action did not come ordinarily until the fifties.

olis and Little Pigeon Associations appointed a local minister to travel and preach to destitute areas within their bounds, in 1843. Curry's Prairie churches adopted a similar policy in 1848, Coffee Creek in 1849, Sand Creek in 1850, and Flat Rock and Long Run Associations in 1852. Such undertakings could enlist local support that was not available for the General Association.²⁶

These indigenous missionary efforts, it may be noted, were confined to the older and stronger centers where the work was pretty well established. Everything depended upon the ability to organize and support the enterprise and upon the quality of the local leadership which could be enlisted. An executive committee usually met quarterly to direct the work and to receive contributions from the churches. In a few of the districts congregations were requested to contribute five cents per member per year. Missionaries sometimes travelled as many as 450 miles on horseback annually, preaching one hundred sermons or more for compensation not exceeding fifty dollars. The nature and effectiveness of these efforts varied widely. In some areas much was done in the promotion of Sunday Schools, weekly instead of monthly meetings, compensation for pastors, and such projects as Franklin College and a Baptist state paper.²⁷ In districts where capable leadership was not available

26 The Indianapolis Association did not cooperate with the state work as a whole until 1847; Flat Rock and White Lick until 1857. Sand Creek Association began cooperating with the Home Mission Society in 1852 and with the state work in 1858.

27 Curry's Prairie AM, 1846-50; Sand Creek AM, 1850-59; White Lick AM, 1848-51; First Prairie Creek CM, 1848, 1854; Bethel CM, 1847-54; Vernal CM, 1842-53. Vernal voted the five cent levy proposal in 1851. Leading figures in such work were Abraham Stark in Curry's Prairie; W. T. Stott sr. and John Stott, his son, in Sand Creek; Jacob and John Ryner-son and Samuel McCormick in the White Lick Association.

it was not possible to conduct an effective program aside from enlisting explicit acknowledgment of responsibility for missionary endeavor.²⁸ It probably required several years of this kind of experimentation to demonstrate the necessity of a central recruiting and coordinating agency.

Similar experience was had in connection with numerous local undertakings to promote secondary education in various parts of the state. One of the earliest was the Eleutherian College, sponsored in 1848 by two abolitionist leaders, Thomas and J. G. Cravens, at College Hill in Jefferson county. It was for negro students, the name being derived from the Greek word meaning "free." The school was largely dependent upon the support of friends within the Madison, Coffee Creek, and Sand Creek Associations. It operated after a fashion until shortly after the close of the Civil War.²⁹ At the opposite end of the state a group of Baptists of New England origin organized the Northeastern Indiana Literary Institute in 1850 at Orland. This school survived as the Orland Academy until 1878. The same group that was sponsoring Franklin College undertook, in 1852-54, to found a Western Female University at Lafayette. The effort was abortive and served to focus the attention of others upon this need. One of the more successful girls' schools was begun at Ladoga, Indiana, in 1855. The local community provided buildings and the Freedom Baptist Association sponsored the

²⁸ Flat Rock, Long Run, and Madison Associations could not command the services of a good itinerant preacher. Little Pigeon had similar difficulty, but was none the less emphatic in the support of Sabbath Schools, the American Indian Mission of McCoy, Franklin College, and the *Christian Messenger* of Indianapolis.

²⁹ Stott, 331-332. J. C. Thompson joined the faculty in 1848, and William Brand, previously at Franklin, was in charge of it during the Civil War.

maintenance of the enterprise. It operated on a chronic deficit for several years, and finally shifted its location to the college buildings at Franklin in 1867 under the leadership of two Franklin College graduates.³⁰ Less successful enterprises were attempted by the Baptists at Vevay, Utica, Mitchell, Crown Point, Huntington, Perry County, and Evansville during the sixties.³¹ However laudable the intentions of the sponsors of these various undertakings may have been, their net result was to scatter resources that should have been definitely concentrated.

During the late fifties the Baptists of Indianapolis became convinced that the capital city should be the place where all the educational efforts of the Baptists should be centered. They established the Indianapolis Female Institute in 1859, and were insistent in their demand that the men's college should be moved from Franklin to the same location. The Female Institute drew its patronage from a fairly wide constituency and its curriculum ranged from primary instruction to a complete college course, including also instruction in painting, music, etiquette, and other "ornamental" subjects. It enjoyed its greatest prosperity during the Civil War, attaining a total enrollment of 289 in 1865. The refusal of the Indianapolis "brethren" to support Franklin College during these years was a major cause for the closing of the latter school in 1864. But the Female

30 *Ibid.*, 334-341; Minutes of the Baptist Education Society, 1853-54; White Lick AM, 1854-1855. White Lick and Bedford Associations also supported Ladoga, as did individual churches, such as Vernal.

31 Cady, *Franklin College*, 88-90, 96-97; Bethel Association supported the Utica school, Perry County a school at Rome, and Orleans and Bedford Associations the Mitchell Academy.

Institute was obliged to suspend its own operations in 1869 when Franklin was revived on a coeducational basis.³²

The need of some general directing agency within the state which could coordinate Baptist efforts in missionary and educational ventures was quite obvious. Equally insistent was the necessity of reorganizing local programs to promote the union of neighboring churches and to assist in the establishment of new congregations in larger communities which were relatively destitute of religious facilities.

The General Association and the Home Mission Society.

The General Association had a very difficult time making its influence felt to any large extent during the first fifteen years of its history. Few Baptist bodies would dare support it officially for reasons that have been explained above. Of the individuals who were responsible for founding the General Association only two of the original thirty-three were still active at the end of the first decade.³³ Considering the demands of the various domestic missionary programs and the neces-

32 *Catalogue of the Indianapolis Female Institute*, 1862-1870. Attendance at daily prayers was compulsory. Bible classes for studying the Scriptures and for reporting on the sermon of the day were held on Sunday afternoons. The Institute was not strictly sectarian in emphasis, however.

33 The death of Judge Jesse L. Holman in 1842 precipitated a crisis both for the Association and the college. Few Baptists in the state approached him in intellectual powers, understanding, and effective leadership. He was bold in his advocacy of missionary enterprises and yet entirely lacking in bitterness toward those who opposed him. He was held in great affection by the younger leaders in the church who cherished his counsel and friendship on a great variety of questions. Wrote George Matthews to him in 1838: "I do not find so kind a spirit with which to blend." Only William Rees and John McCoy remained of the thirty-three founders of the General Association.

sity of making extensive solicitation of funds to keep Franklin College alive, very meager resources indeed were available for state work. The political excitement attending the annexation of Texas and Oregon and the war with Mexico did not diminish their difficulties. It was, therefore, not until near the close of the decade of the forties that the General Association showed any marked evidences of vitality.³⁴

The General Association undertook a more effective program from 1848 to 1852, under the able leadership of Rev. Timothy R. Cressey, pastor of the Indianapolis Church. Cressey came to the state as an appointee of the Home Mission Society, and in his position as Corresponding Secretary of the General Association he did much to secure cooperation between the two organizations.³⁵ During his first year as Secretary, in 1847, he directed an extended survey of the Baptist churches of the state which brought to light some alarming facts. He found that not half of the forty-seven Associations into which the Baptist churches were divided could be counted on to cooperate with the missionary program even to a limited degree. The vast majority of the 661 churches enjoyed only one service per month; in but twenty churches was there preaching every Sabbath day. Only six churches could be found who employed the full-time services of a pastor, and the list of ordained

34 GAM, 1842-1847. Milton Stapp of Madison, a trustee of the college and twice Lieutenant-Governor of Indiana, was President of the General Association during nine of these discouraging years. The organization employed only two men in 1844, one in 1845, and four serving an aggregate of fifteen months, in 1846.

35 Cressey was a native of Connecticut, having been educated at Amherst and Andover. He had served as a pastor in Cincinnati and as the agent of the American and Foreign Bible Society since 1835.

Baptist ministers was almost four hundred short of the number of churches. Forty-eight of the counties of Indiana contained no Baptist church at all.

On the basis of these facts Cressey made a vigorous appeal for the enlargement of the work of the General Association to meet the demands of the situation. He stressed particularly the matter of Sunday School promotion, the paying of ministers, and the development of an extensive educational program for prospective ministerial candidates.³⁶

A program of solicitation was undertaken, with William Rees of Delphi acting as the general agent of the Association. Annual pledges were secured from individuals and churches extending over a period of five years for a Village Fund and a Christian Fund, the first to be devoted to pioneer work and the other to be used in sustaining enterprises already established. The Home Mission Society, with which the General Association had been cooperating as an auxiliary since 1841, gave generous financial support to Cressey's program. Rees travelled widely over the state collecting contributions and enlisting the services of scores of local ministers for short periods of time. Fifty-two ministers aided in the work during his most active year. The mileage of the various missionary agents aggregated from 22,000 to 26,000 miles per year during the four year period, while the sermons preached numbered as high as 3500 annually. Rees died prematurely in 1850, largely as a

36 *Ibid.*, 1847-1848; *Reports of the Home Mission Society, 1844-1852*. In Benedict's *General History of the Baptists*, p. 876, it is stated that not more than thirty Baptist ministers within Indiana actually supported themselves entirely by their preaching. This figure is probably too high.

result of his strenuous exertions in behalf of the program.³⁷

The effect of this intensive program was immediately discernible in the rapid advance in every phase of the church program. Educational activity especially took on new life with practically every progressive Association within the state undertaking to promote the cause.³⁸ No longer permitted by the churches on sufferance as before, the Sunday Schools were acclaimed as "the hope of the church, and a pledge of promise for the conversion of the World." The schools varied greatly in size and character, many churches cooperating in union schools. They ran for only a part of the year as a rule, because of the bad condition of the roads. The reported enrollment in Baptist Sunday Schools multiplied almost four times from 1848 to 1850, and the number of prayer services held annually jumped from 313 to 1822 during the same period.³⁹

Cressey's plan was well conceived. Only those churches were directly assisted who were trying honestly to help themselves. Effort was concentrated in the more strategic centers, with less and less of sending unsolicited aid into destitute places. In making application, the local body must obligate itself for specific

37 Smith, 229-231; GAM, 1848-1850. Many of the pledges were unpaid, but the total collections of \$1500 to \$1800 per year were several times the previous annual receipts.

38 Huntington Association in 1845 and Indianapolis in 1846 were among the first to sponsor Sunday Schools. A half-dozen or more, including Coffee Creek, Elkhart River, Sand Creek, Madison, and White Lick Associations followed from 1848 to 1852. Weasaw, Curry's Prairie, Bedford, Monticello, and Flat Rock Associations adopted the program officially during the fifties.

39 GAM, 1848-1850; Elkhart River AM, 1848; Ebenezer and Liberty CM, 1850. The Indianapolis church purchased their first Sunday School instructional books in 1847.

sums, all payments by the General Association and by the Home Mission Society being made contingent on the honoring of such pledges. Without such precautions, the affording of missionary aid might easily have led to greater debility rather than to strength. The Board of the General Association met quarterly at Franklin to receive reports from missionaries and to pass upon all applications for help.⁴⁰

The program of the General Association eventually ran into serious difficulties. The five-year subscriptions began to expire and the Home Mission Society, which had contributed a major portion of the money required by the state program, began to demand a larger share in the direction of the work. New tasks in western states were inviting their attention, and it was felt that the Indiana churches should assume at least half the cost of the local program. In addition, the Home Mission Board asked for the privilege of soliciting funds in all of the Missionary Baptist churches of the state. Under the new plan, the functions of the General Association would be limited to the providing of information concerning needs and accomplishments in various localities; the actual direction of the work rested with the Mission Board. As a matter of courtesy only the missionaries would send copies of their quarterly Home Mission reports to the Secretary of the General Association as well. Not until 1853 was a satisfactory solution arrived at, under which each organization was

⁴⁰ *Home Mission Reports*, 1844-1849; GAM, 1847, 1850. Such applications included population statistics, the number and size of churches of other denominations within the area, and a thorough description of the history, membership, meeting house, and the financial ability of the church, as well as data concerning the man to fill the place. Detailed reports were presented quarterly by the missionaries covering all phases of their activity.

permitted to have its own soliciting agents in the field. All applications for appointment of Home missionaries were to be made through the Board of the General Association, subject to the concurrent action of the Home Mission Board. It was also agreed that all local missionary societies should be brought into auxiliary relationship with the two bodies.⁴¹

The temporary revival of the state program following the adjustment made with the national Society was cut short at the end of 1854 by the fact that the Home Mission Board opened eight mission centers in the territories of Kansas and Nebraska, where controversy over the introduction of slavery was at white heat after the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. No less than nineteen appointments of the Home Mission Society in Indiana were abruptly discontinued. Few new fields in the state were occupied subsequently except in areas where German immigrants were congregated. The number of Home missionaries locally assigned declined from twenty-eight in 1854 to a mere six in 1859. The theoretical assumption that these withdrawals were made because local churches were strong enough to take up the burden was not true, for the work in numerous instances suffered noticeable decline.⁴²

41 GAM, 1851-1853; Indianapolis AM, 1851. The claims of the state program were ably presented by Cressey in the Minutes for 1851. They were based on the necessity of eliminating local jealousies, and of doing effectively that which the local bodies could not do for themselves. The number of churches represented in the General Association never exceeded forty, and the Associations eighteen. Reports in 1856 covered 326 churches in twenty Associations.

42 *Reports of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1853-58.* Only fourteen of the 71 fields aided by the Society during the fifties were entered during the latter half of the decade. The loss was made up to a limited extent by the colporter work of the Publication Society and its sponsorship of Sunday Schools. See Stevens, 45-47.

The General Association lost tragically in its leadership during the fifties. The death of such men as William Rees, Leroy Mayfield, Reuben Coffey, Benjamin Reese, A. Waters, and Abraham Stark of the older generation left gaps that could not easily be filled. The shortage of competent ministers became increasingly acute.⁴³ President Silas Bailey of Franklin College attempted to assist by providing increased opportunities for the training of ministers at the College. But the special course of lectures which he designed for the purpose were poorly attended, and were abandoned after two years of experimentation. The problem was, of course, beyond the reach of the College. Advanced training for ministers within the state could never be successfully prosecuted until the churches were strengthened to a point where they could command the services of such men. The majority of those who profited by the training available at Franklin found their way into professional or academic pursuits or else removed to more promising fields outside the state.⁴⁴

There was a considerable increase in missionary receipts for use within the state during the latter part of the decade, reaching the high point of \$2400 in 1860.⁴⁵ Although attendance at the annual sessions of the General Association remained small, the constituency as reported in 1860 included twenty-two Associations with almost 400 churches and 21,000 affiliated communicants. Contributions for foreign missions increased more slowly, and the Indiana churches generally lagged behind the

43 White Lick AM, 1851, 1854; Flat Rock AM, 1854-57; Curry's Prairie AM, 1857; GAM, 1852.

44 See Cady, *Franklin College*, chapter III.

45 GAM, 1856-60. The amount in 1860 was three times that collected in 1856, but approximately half of it was expended for domestic efforts.

Baptists of other northern states in per member contributions for this purpose.⁴⁶ Evidences of the survival of older issues of controversy could still be found in the periodic secessionary movements within Primitive Baptist groups, but the trend was all in the direction of more liberal views. Formal debates between Baptists and the followers of Campbell continued to be held in some localities for many years, becoming all the while more irrelevant.⁴⁷

The strong missionary emphasis during the fifties undoubtedly contributed to a larger degree of cooperation across denominational lines. The Sand Creek Association Minutes for 1852 included an eloquent appeal for greater charity among brethren in the face of honest differences of opinion. At Greensburg a proposal for the union of the Separate and the Regular Baptist churches was projected in 1850, and a similar movement was undertaken at Valparaiso in 1852. In a number of communities, meeting houses were used cooperatively with Presbyterians, Methodists, and even Christian bodies. Congregations often assisted in the prosecution of revivalist meetings in neighboring churches. The Weasaw

46 *Ibid.* The amount was \$1100 in 1856 and \$1700 in 1860. Foreign missionary effort was backed especially by the following Associations: Indianapolis, Weasaw, White Lick, Flat Rock, Coffee Creek, and Tippecanoe. Outstanding leaders of the Association included T. L. Breckinridge, Silas Bailey, U. B. Miller, and M. G. Clarke.

47 Wilson Thompson (pp. 310-13) relates how the Sugar Creek church split in the fifties and deserted his leadership. See also *A Debate . . . Between Rev. Joel Hume of Posey County, Indiana, of the Regular Baptist Church and Elder Benjamin Franklin of Cincinnati, Ohio, of the Christian Church* (Mt. Vernon, 1854). The doctrines debated for several days were (1) total hereditary depravity, (2) the capacity of any normal person to be saved, (3) baptism for the remission of sins, and (4) that a saint may apostatize from the faith and be lost. Laughery Association excluded 464 persons because of Campbellism from 1838 to 1848.

Association declared in 1855 that the Baptist faith was not to be identified with any particular creed or ritual, but was rather an attitude of obedience and gratitude toward God and of kindness toward men. A minister in the Sand Creek Association commented, in 1859, that "The most eloquent preaching is that of a consistent daily walk."⁴⁸

Church activities took on an entirely new appearance. Sunday Schools and prayer meetings came to be generally accepted as legitimate Baptist enterprises. In a few churches singing classes and choirs, and occasionally even musical instruments were introduced.⁴⁹ The Indianapolis church employed an organist in 1858. A new Baptist state paper known as the *Witness*, the first since the ill-fated *Baptist Messenger* of 1844-50, was started in 1857 by M. G. Clarke and F. W. Clarke of Indianapolis. It succeeded in a modest way until overtaken by the Civil War.⁵⁰ Franklin College enjoyed a vigorous revival under President Bailey. Another periodic renewal of evangelistic enlistment occurred in many areas of the state in 1857 and 1858, attested both by Associational statistics and by church minutes as well.⁵¹

The tendency toward a more liberal point of view

48 Valparaiso CM, 1852; Sand Creek AM, 1850, 1852, 1859; First Prairie Creek CM, 1853; Morgantown CM, 1854, 1856; Bloomington CM, 1862; Vienna CM, 1855; Weasaw Baptist AM, 1855. A formal arrangement for joint use of a meeting house with the Presbyterians for twelve years was entered into by the Vienna church.

49 Mount Zion CM, 1848; First Prairie Creek CM, 1855; Trafalgar CM, 1849; Delphi CM, 1837; Lewis Creek CM, 1836.

50 Smith, 372-375; GAM, 1856-64. The *Witness* merged with the *Christian Times* of Chicago in 1864.

51 The gains were particularly marked in the following Associations: Salamonie, Brownstown, Sand Creek, Madison, and Laughery.

expressed itself in the emergency of some unorthodox opinions with reference to hitherto unquestioned views of Bible doctrine. It proved to be a comparatively easy transition, for example, from the absolute predestinarian point of view under which only the elect could be saved, to the conclusion that God's purpose was to save everyone and that universal salvation would, therefore, ultimately be achieved. Universalist views gained acceptance during the late fifties in most unexpected places. Some Baptist churches adopted the practice of open communion with members of other evangelical denominations. The ferment of critical thought with regard to the Scriptures was more rare, but it found a champion in Robert Dale Owen, formerly of New Harmony and currently a professor at Indiana University. Many conservative leaders suspected that Franklin College was infested with similar radical ideas, especially after it withdrew support from the local Franklin church in 1854.⁵² The guardians of the *status quo* were still finding things to worry about.

New Standards of Financial Administration.

Events occurring in the late forties and the fifties contributed a powerful impetus toward the abandonment of traditional prejudice against undertaking specific financial obligation for the pastor. It will be recalled that this was one of the major emphases of the program of the General Association under Rev. Cressey's direction. Several factors contributed to reënforce the trend. For one thing the gratis-serving ministers of the older

⁵² Esarey, II, 573-575; Lewis Creek CM, 1854; Morgantown CM, 1858; Indianapolis CM, 1858; Thompson, *op. cit.*, 251-53, 310-13. The Salamonie Association was so alarmed over the spread of atheistic thought in 1855 that the problem was discussed in the Circular Letter.

generation were steadily dying off,⁵³ and it proved impossible to replace them without offers of support.⁵⁴ In the second place, the old once-a-month pattern of services was proving woefully inadequate in urban communities where social contacts were multiplied.⁵⁵ A more potent weapon was the Home Mission program itself, with its requirement that all congregations seeking missionary assistance propose a reasonable pledge of their own in support of the work. Generally speaking, the newer churches in northern Indiana were fully committed to the obligation of pastoral support from the outset.⁵⁶ Finally there was the general rise in land values and the improvement of the economic circumstances of the congregations, which were a prerequisite for any considerable advance in church finances.

The customary procedure within the older churches fell considerably short of Rev. Cressey's proposal. He made the minister's salary a formal business transaction, requiring systematic sharing of income "as God had prospered" on pain of disciplinary correction with specifically-chosen officers to receive and administer the funds.⁵⁷ At the outset, a special vote was usually necessary for each occasion when it seemed advisable to "lift" a collec-

53 Leroy Mayfield, a trustee of Bloomington College, served as pastor of Vernal church for twenty-five years without pay until his death; similarly Judge Holman served the Aurora church gratis for the last eight years of his life. Immediately thereafter, both churches offered compensation.

54 The Indianapolis church voted its first salary in 1838, Madison in 1843, Ebenezer in 1846, Vernal in 1849, Vernon in 1853, Columbus in 1854.

55 Cressey stressed this point in particular in his report of 1848.

56 Church constitutions frequently affirmed such obligation. See Delphi CM, 1844-50; Middlefork, 1851; Bloomington, 1858. The Huntington church in 1842 offered "board, room, and horse-keeping and \$150 per year."

57 GAM, 1848, 1850.

tion or to circulate a subscription list. It often required several years before such practices became a matter of routine. A full decade might then elapse before any fixed salary would be designated for the pastor.⁵⁸ Even then the pay was very small. Monthly preaching could ordinarily be had for fifty to seventy-five dollars per year; half-time called for \$150; full-time, a salary of \$300 to \$350 with a house or a small plot of land usually included. The older practice of requiring the pastor to collect the subscriptions to his salary was definitely abandoned. Incidental fees derived from marriages and funerals added a little to the minister's income.⁵⁹

A principal source of financial difficulty on the part of the churches of many localities was denominational sectarianism. An examination of two specific situations will illustrate. In Charlestown, a village of a few hundred population in Clark county, six churches were operating in 1841: two Baptist, two Methodist, one Presbyterian, and one Disciples of Christ. None of the congregations exceeded forty-five in average attendance at worship; four of them ran from twelve to twenty-five present. The oldest Baptist group had lost its building to the Campbellites, and subsequently suffered another division. The missionary Baptist pastor

58 The First Prairie Creek church took offerings as early as 1841; the practice was regularized by 1854; the pastor's salary was not definitely fixed until 1865. The Indianapolis church voted to take regular collections on alternate Sundays in 1851.

59 The averages are taken from the minutes of Ebenezer, Vernal, Vernon, Harbert's Creek, Columbus, Morgantown, and Lewis Creek churches. Elder John Reece reports in his manuscript note-book that he married 61 couples during the decade of the forties, receiving a fee of one dollar for most of them. Only eight exceeded that amount. William Pratt reported (*Memoires*, I, 33) in 1840 that two dollars was the largest fee he had ever received for preaching.

and wife supported themselves by teaching school.⁶⁰ The Huntington church reported a similar situation in connection with an application for Home Mission aid in 1866. In that town of three thousand people, there were seven Protestant churches besides the Baptist one.⁶¹ Constituencies of such limited size could not hope to maintain effective church programs on a full-time basis, nor could they assume any responsibility for the extension of religious institutions into localities that were as destitute of church ministrations as Charlestown was surfeited with them. The wasting of religious energies and resources in such situations is a problem that has long remained unsolved in many communities.

Another financial demand which a growing congregation could not avoid was the cost of providing larger and more adequately equipped meeting houses to replace the original ones. Rural congregations during the fifties usually required structures ranging up to fifty feet in length and capable of being heated in cold weather by one or two stoves. In the urban centers, the demands were much more exacting. To raise the lump sums necessary to initiate building enterprises was a very difficult matter, and the completion of the project often required a decade or more of time.⁶² The hazard of fire counselled the use of brick construction where such could be afforded. In rapidly growing urban

⁶⁰ *Holman Correspondence*, John C. Post to Holman, Jan. 17, 1841.

⁶¹ Huntington CM, 1841. The Circular Letter of the Sand Creek Association in 1845 discussed the same problem of too many congregational units.

⁶² The First Prairie Creek building was forty by fifty feet. It was started in 1840 with only \$6.97½ subscribed; it was completed in 1850 and completely paid for in 1853. The Ebenezer meeting house was nine years in building; the Canaan church (Salamonie Association) twelve years; the Seymour building, twenty years.

areas, such as Indianapolis, the acquisition of a suitable church site was almost as difficult as the perennial problem of improved accommodations.⁶³ Many such enterprises undertaken in the fifties were halted by the Civil War and not completed until after 1865.

In the face of increased financial demands for pastor's salary, church construction and maintenance, several expedients were tried. A number of churches experimented with so-called "ad valorem" methods, by which assessments were graduated according to the financial abilities of the adult male members, with a small flat rate in force for all. As a rule this method worked very badly and was abandoned in the course of a year or two. A variation appeared in rural congregations by which the members were permitted to work out their assessments by providing fuel for the meeting house, by erecting a rod of horse rack, or by repairing the roof. Equal assessments of twenty-five or fifty cents per quarter for each male member were sometimes levied for janitor services. The Indianapolis and Huntington churches were unique in that they employed with success a system of graduated pew rentals as a means of distributing the financial burden.⁶⁴ A few churches designated the pastor as the agent for soliciting building fund

63 Within a decade after the construction of their second meeting house, the Indianapolis church started a campaign to purchase a more suitable site. Before the site was paid for, the meeting house was destroyed by fire, requiring the immediate undertaking of an ambitious building program. See Indianapolis CM, 1845-60. The original buildings at Columbus and Delphi were of brick construction.

64 Taken from the Minutes of the Indianapolis, Columbus, Valparaiso, First Prairie Creek, Bloomington, Delphi, Vernon, Huntington CM, 1840-1862. Vernon designated six persons who were to pay twenty-five cents per month for janitor services. Valparaiso levied twenty-five cents per quarter on all adult males.

pledges, granting him per diem compensation and sometimes a ten per cent. commission on all collections made. A deacon was usually chosen as custodian of the funds.⁶⁵

As matters of church property gained importance, the board of trustees became increasingly important in the management of all business matters. Business sessions of the congregation were eventually shifted from Saturday to one of the mid-week meetings. Formal reports from the treasurer and the trustees were routine matters of procedure. In some churches a door-keeper or head usher was added to the list of church offices. It was customary to receive competitive bids from those who wished to serve the church as sexton. The compensation was usually from thirty to forty dollars a year where provision for fuel and lights were included. Candles gave place to lard-oil lamps in the fifties; coal oil was being used by some churches as early as 1861.⁶⁶

It would be a mistake to regard the trends observable in the more progressive communities as being typical of Baptist churches generally. Home-made manufactures and the rough manners of the frontier were steadily giving way, it is true, but a considerable area of Indiana was still heavily timbered when the Civil War began. The Baptist constituency was no doubt represented largely in that fifty per cent. of the population in 1861 who still lived in log cabins and wore hunting shirts.⁶⁷ In spite of the considerable evidence

65 The Columbus church, in 1852, paid the pastor seventy-five cents a day plus expenses; a commission of 10% was added in 1854.

66 Blue River CM, 1859; Vernon, 1840; Columbus, 1855; First Prairie Creek, 1851; Indianapolis, 1851-59. A few churches held business meetings only once a quarter.

67 Esarey, II, 585, 592-93. President Bailey at Franklin College had little success in persuading the students to keep their boots blacked.

of changed economic status, the material resources of Baptist congregations probably lagged somewhat behind the financial status of other religious groups with the state.

CHAPTER VII

THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL ISSUES

The acceptance of responsibility for a program of missionary benevolences on the part of Baptist churches in Indiana tended to broaden their concept of social obligation. Disciplinary control which had been designed originally as a defensive action against the evidences of worldliness within the church membership gradually assumed a more directive character in an attempt to reshape society according to the pattern of the body. The conscience of the church began to concern itself with various public questions of varying importance, from Sabbath observance to slavery and the preservation of the Union. In some phases of this development, agitation respecting temperance and slavery, for example, the church folk were heavily indebted to Eastern influences, but the particular form of expression which the reaction took was in every case conditioned by Western factors.

Church Discipline as a Factor in Social Control.

The developing social conscience of the churches was in large measure an extension of normal disciplinary activities. It was a natural step, for example, to proceed from disciplinary measures against one's own members for betting at shooting matches, participation in lotteries, violation of the Sabbath, and excessive drinking to an outright endeavor to curb gambling generally,

along with Sabbath desecration and the liquor traffic.¹ This tendency was in part a thoroughly defensible one, since demoralizing social practices were destroying the moral fibre of the citizenry, including church members, faster than the churches could salvage it. But the churches themselves were responsible for their loss of moral prestige, which seemed to necessitate resort to more arbitrary methods of social control. The inexperience of congregations in dealing with public matters constituted an additional liability.

Recognition of the judicial authority of the church was seriously impaired as a result of the long period of doctrinal disputation and schism. The moral prestige of institutions lapsed when rabid hostility, back-biting and deliberate misrepresentation became the rule. The wholesale exclusions which took place were in large measure evidence of the sacrifice of Christian fellowship, not indications of higher ethical or doctrinal standards.² Changing social patterns also contributed to the tendency to pay less attention to church pronouncements. This is particularly evident in connection with the frequency with which the practice of dancing came before churches

1 Most cases of exclusion by actual count came from charges of non-attendance and refusal to acknowledge the authority of the church. Examination of all kinds of anti-social conduct continued throughout the nineteenth century, both public and private offenses. See Vernal CM, 1818-42; Coffee CM, 1837-42; Indianapolis CM, 1830-56; scattering notes from Delphi, Morgantown, Huntington, Bethel, Wirt, Sharon, Columbus, Valparaiso, Blue River CM.

2 Efforts to rule authoritatively on theological questions were usually productive of further division. A council called for such purpose in Flat Rock Association in 1860 encountered so much difficulty that it was finally decided to waive the requirement of the acceptance of the ruling. The Indianapolis church excluded forty-five members for non-attendance from 1851 to 1856. Members of the Coffee Creek, Ebenezer, Harbert's Creek, and Bloomington churches similarly refused to answer charges on a great variety of offenses.

for correction after the middle forties.³ The commercialization of dancing and the tendency for drinking to be associated with it made this sort of conduct particularly objectionable.⁴ Circuses and theatres began to be placed under the ban by many churches during the same period. Sabbath observance was another matter of concern, especially in areas of the state influenced by the standards of newly-arrived German immigrants. The use of tobacco was not usually condemned, but some protest was raised occasionally against the habit of many ministers indulging the chewing of tobacco while preaching.⁵

The traditional obligation of neighborliness so characteristic of pioneer society in relieving the distress of needy folk within the community was taken over by some congregations as a church function. The Coffee Creek church in 1846 undertook to aid in a systematic way all Baptists whose names were found on the pauper's list of the county. A more frank assertion of the responsibility of the church for such sharing of its resources was made by the Flat Rock Association in 1848:

"Are we feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and doing good to the extent of our ability? . . . Are we interested in the welfare of the bodies of men and their temporal interests as was our Savior? . . . Does

3 See Door Village CM, 1844; Trafalgar CM, 1852; Harbert's Creek CM, 1845 ff. The latter church excluded a dozen for dancing in 1845-46; fifteen more in 1856. The practice of dancing was probably fairly constant; the enforcement against it spasmodic.

4 Esarey, I, 487; Delphi CM, 1861; Lewis Creek CM, 1871; Huntington CM, 1874. In some churches dancing did not become an object of discipline until the seventies.

5 Delphi CM, 1848-51; Valparaiso, 1858; Ebenezer CM, 1857; E. C. Miller, *Growth of American Baptists from 1845 to 1860* MS. (University of Chicago, 1931), 79-81. Declared the Ebenezer church in 1857: "We are and intend to be a Sabbath-keeping body, and regret the growing disregard of its sanctity especially among our own members."

our benevolence, like his, encircle the world? . . . Let, therefore, the poor, the sick, the afflicted and the destitute of our own churches be sought out and supplied by the benevolence of the brethren, as in the days of the apostles. And let others also, even our enemies, share in our liberality.”⁶

For the most part, such relief remained a matter of private initiative rather than of church action, however.

The most pronounced venture of the Baptists of Indiana into the field of social action was occasioned by new forces rather than by traditional ones.

The First Venture into Political Action.

By far the most serious social problem with which the churches concerned themselves was that of the sale and consumption of alcoholic liquors. The drinking of liquor had been practically universal in the pioneer days of the Western country. One of the churches in the Coffee Creek Association in 1815 was known as the Whiskey Run Baptist church. Whiskey was considered not only a necessity for health but an indispensable condition of hospitality and courtesy. The political principles of the people, furthermore, led them to resent any attempt to infringe upon their personal liberties in this respect by the application of either political or religious sanctions. The emphasis upon temperance, which was included in the program of the early missionary leaders, was one of the least popular of the proposals which they advocated. Abraham Lincoln's boyhood interest in the temperance cause ran directly counter to the attitude of the Baptist church to which his family belonged. In later life he referred to these earlier temperance agents as having been suspected of ulterior

6 Flat Rock AM, 1848; Vernon CM, 1840-41.

motives looking toward a union of church and state.⁷ The Baptists of Indiana evinced very little interest in the issue until the decade of the forties.

The ruinous effect of whiskey drinking was recognized by Eastern Baptist agencies long before any effective movement was organized for its control. The Philadelphia Association took cognizance of the question as early as 1788, while the Massachusetts Missionary Society was very emphatic on the issue in the early years of its history. Two of the earliest publications of the Tract Society were on drunkenness and intemperance. Jonathan Going, the first Secretary of the Baptist Home Mission Society, was a strong temperance man, and the subject was made a matter of primary social emphasis by Home missionaries wherever they went.⁸ The groups among the Baptists of Indiana who first became interested in the question were naturally those most intimately connected with the missionary program. The General Association took a stand in 1837, advocating the practice of total abstinence as a moral duty.⁹ In 1840 came its

7 Coffee Creek AM, 1815; *Early Speeches of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 1907), 73-74; Spencer, I, 705-712. It will be recalled that William Polke advocated economy in whiskey consumption as a means of financing a missionary program. The *Memoirs* of William Pratt tell repeatedly of his being offered whiskey in the Baptist home where he was entertained. He declared in his journal: "Drunkenness has been a crying sin in the Baptist churches of the Middle West." See also de Blois and Barnes, *John M. Peck*, 83.

8 Stevens, 64. The Massachusetts Baptist Convention passed the following resolution in 1830: "The rum conflagration which has been raging for many years almost unchecked . . . is far from being subdued. Ministers and churches are the heaven-constituted agents to subdue this dreadful destroyer. . . . But some of the firemen are themselves asleep—the alarm has not yet awakened them." *Baptist Home Missions in North America*, 531-532.

9 GAM, 1837. The Indianapolis Association, however, refused to pronounce on the issue in 1837. This was probably

first demand for complete prohibition of the liquor traffic, in the following terms:

"The use of intoxicating draught is none other than emphatically pernicious; . . . it poisons, destroys, kills both mind and body; its inevitable tendency is . . . the prostration of morals and the accumulation of crime; . . . the obliteration of every social and religious obligation; . . . and the annihilation of every high and holy feeling of the soul which elevates man above the brutes that perish and allies him to God. . . . The direction of effort now is to . . . besiege his strongholds until the license system shall be abolished and proper prohibitory laws enacted and sustained."¹⁰

The movement gained steadily in its acceptance among the missionary churches throughout the forties. Bethel Association, in 1842, declared that the use of ardent spirits as a beverage was destructive to the peace and happiness of the churches and ruinous to both the temporal and eternal interests of men. The church should, therefore, work to banish the evil from the land. The Northern Indiana Association passed a resolution in the following year condemning the manufacture, sale, and consumption of intoxicating liquors, and pledging its members to suppress the traffic. The selling of liquor came to be regarded as ground for exclusion from many churches.¹¹ The prohibitory law of the state of Maine was acclaimed by the Elkhart River Association immediately after its passage in 1846. The Indianapolis Association took its first action in favor of total abstinence in 1849, and declared in the following year that it was the "imperative duty of every Christian

one factor which delayed the affiliation of the Indianapolis Association with the state work until 1846.

¹⁰ GAM, 1840. By William Corbin.

¹¹ Bethel AM, 1842; Northern Indiana AM, 1843; Indianapolis CM, 1843. Most of the churches did not forbid the sale of liquor by members until the 1850's.

to oppose in every honorable way the traffic and the use of all intoxicating drinks as a beverage." In 1852, the same body definitely recommended that Indiana include among her statutes the principles of the Maine liquor law.¹² In spite of the fact that much prejudice survived in conservative quarters against the temperance cause, the movement gained steadily within missionary Baptist circles until it became virtually a part of their creed.¹³

The steady development of the temperance program within the churches would possibly have fared far better in the long run if it had not become involved in the affairs of the ephemeral and misguided Peoples or "Know-Nothing" Party in the early fifties. Several movements of quite different origins converged in a remarkable fashion to produce this political phenomenon. The first of these factors was probably the most extravagant assertion of manifest destiny and national egotism growing out of the expansionist hysteria and patriotism of the "roaring forties." A second factor can be seen in the fact that the Middle Western areas of the United States received their first large influx of alien peoples at the very time that this jingo spirit was at its height. These were largely German immigrants, partly refugees from the famine conditions in Catholic south Germany,

12 Elkhart River AM, 1846, 1848; *Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Society*, 1847; Indianapolis AM, 1849-1852. The influence of the Washingtonian Temperance Movement of reformed drunkards was perhaps even more influential than that of the churches in many instances. Washingtonians were excluded by many Baptist bodies in the thirties and early forties. See Spencer, I, 711-22.

13 A serious quarrel developed in Harbert's Creek church in 1844, when a member who was running for the State Legislature objected to beingigmatized as an anti-temperance candidate. Several meetings broke up in confusion. Bedford Association condemned the liquor traffic by resolution in 1853.

and partly liberal-minded exiles from the abortive European revolutions of 1848. The Baptists of Indiana in particular were acutely conscious of the differing social and religious traditions of the new arrivals. The fact that the retail liquor and brewing industries of the state very early fell under German control connected this racial difference with hostility to the temperance question. The final factor in the formation of the new political group was the disintegration of the Whig party following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill in 1854.

Many expressions of the spirit of manifest destiny can be found among Baptist sources of this period. God had destined North America, said T. R. Cressy of Indianapolis, in 1851, to be the place second only to Palestine where he would work out his designs. On what other assumption, he asked, could one explain the steady advance of Protestant Anglo-Saxon America to the exclusion of French and Spanish interests in the continent. It could well have been, he continued, that the discovery of gold in California had been deliberately postponed by divine will until the arrival of the Americans. Furthermore, the great continent of Asia, only recently opened to Protestant missionary activity would be made easily accessible to America as soon as the railway could be completed to the Pacific, thus presenting a glorious task to God's chosen people. Said the author in conclusion:

"Our republic in its constitution and laws is of heavenly origin. . . . Does God mean nothing by all this long train of the most extraordinary events ever associated with any nation on earth?"¹⁴

¹⁴ *Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1851, 68-76.*

Apologies which were offered in support of the work of the Home Mission Society during these years frequently assumed a patriotic coloring. The Baptists must not be careless of America's destiny, and the Home Mission Society's influence was admirably calculated "to perpetuate the rights of conscience and the civil and religious liberties of our republic."¹⁵

The arrival of tens of thousands of south German immigrants, many of whom came directly to the Middle West, greatly aggravated this spirit of ultra-patriotism. Severe winters, floods, and crop failures in the upper valleys of the Danube, Rhine, Maine, and the Moselle rivers started the current in 1847, and the numbers were greatly increased as a result of the political upheavals in the following year. Most of the new arrivals were Catholic farmers and traders in moderate but by no means destitute circumstances. There was also a large sprinkling of intellectual and political liberals among them, who were sufficiently interested in promoting their ideas to organize their unions or *Vereins* upon their arrival in their new homes.¹⁶

The Germans usually settled in fairly compact communities, organizing their own schools and churches and publishing their own newspapers in their native tongue. They were particularly numerous in the cities of Evansville, New Albany, Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, and in the southeastern corner of the state. The shock which was produced from close contact with this alien group,

¹⁵ Sand Creek AM, 1851,1854; *Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Society*, 1853. The patriotic argument frequently took the form of a demand for greater emphasis upon Home Missions than upon Foreign Missions.

¹⁶ McMaster, VII, 221-222, 226-227. The census of 1850 showed 83,000 Germans in Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan alone.

so unfamiliar with the semi-sacred political and religious traditions of America, was made somewhat more sharp by the fact that they took the places vacated by a great many of the original inhabitants who were joining the stampede to California and other western points during these same years.¹⁷

The major concern of the Baptists seems to have been directed at first toward the correction of the supposed religious irregularities of their new neighbors. Nearly every Associational gathering expressed concern over the spread of Romanism and infidelity, and several domestic mission organizations were active in promoting work among the Germans in their immediate vicinity.¹⁸ The General Association issued the following warning in 1853:

"There is an immense foreign population drawn to our shores from all parts of the world by the hope of improving their conditions, trained often under institutions and influences averse to our views of civil and religious liberty. . . . From these sources, errorists of dangerous taint, subtle, crafty, designing, Papal, Infidel, Pantheistic, and openly irreligious are spreading themselves."¹⁹

17 Sand Creek AM, 1851-1857. A check of statistics on letters granted and received by this Association during the period reveals that the number of migrant Baptists exceeded that of any other time in its history. There was a 20 per cent. shift of its membership in 1852 alone, and the entire period averages a 16 per cent. annual change.

18 Indianapolis AM, 1852; Sand Creek AM, 1854; GAM, 1856; Coffee Creek AM, 1853; Stott, 245-246; *Home Mission Society Report*, 1856-1857. The Perry County, Laughery, and Indianapolis Associations were the first to promote domestic missions among the Germans. The Home Mission Society aided at Evansville and in the Northern Association, and the Publication Society sent German colporters to various points. Rev. John H. Krueger was long pastor of the Caesar's Creek German Baptist church in Switzerland county.

19 GAM, 1853. Home Mission work among the Germans was continued at least until 1912.

It was not long before the attention of Protestant groups generally began to focus on the fact that Germans were very actively engaged in the liquor business. The speaker before the General Association in 1854 reported that only two of the forty-four retail distributors of liquor in Indianapolis were native Hoosiers and that thirty-three of them were Germans. The corruption of the morals of the native-born youth within the state was attributed directly to such pernicious foreign influences. Sabbath breaking, especially, was traceable to them. It was an easy transition for many to the conviction that civil and religious liberty in America was being imperiled. The occasion for action seemed to be at hand.

The fact that the Germans affiliated most readily with the Democratic party caused a general stampede of church people formerly associated with the Whigs into a new movement known as the Peoples Party.²⁰ The local group soon united with a national organization known as the "Know-Nothing" Party, the two nominating identical tickets for the state in 1854. Their platform demanded the repeal of all naturalization laws, the election of native Americans alone to office, the support of the American school system, and opposition to the Catholic church and to all foreign secret societies.²¹ Baptist interest in this political contest was confined officially to the liquor issue alone. A number of Associations urged their members to "vote for no man who will not pledge himself to support a prohibitory law," and who was not committed to the seizure and confiscation of all intoxicating liquors kept for illegal sale. The

²⁰ GAM, 1854-1856; Esarey, II, 613-631; Coffee Creek AM, 1852; Salamonie AM, 1853.

²¹ Esarey, II, 629-631, 646.

welfare of "Zion and our common country" demanded that the liquor business be outlawed.²²

The local elections of 1854 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Peoples Party. The combination of religious and national prejudices along with the general feeling of hostility toward the liquor interests overwhelmed the state Democratic machine. Firmly entrenched in the legislature, the victorious group embarked immediately upon an ambitious program of prohibitory legislation. Along with the prohibition of the liquor traffic within the state were other laws intended to enforce the observance of the Sabbath by proscribing such things as rioting, fishing, hunting, and common forms of labor on that day. The reforming movement seemed to lack any appreciation of the proper limits of political control over such matters, and their victory was consequently short-lived. The state courts declared the prohibition law unconstitutional almost immediately. The Democrats regained control of the southern half of the state in 1856, and of the entire state government in 1858, repealing the entire program.²³

Although the Protestant church forces were defeated in this first effort to enlist political sanctions in their fight against the liquor traffic, the episode left a permanent impression upon them. The use of intoxicating beverages, even in moderate quantities, was made a cause for church discipline generally. It was declared to be sinful in character, contrary to the teachings of the Scripture, and undermining to the political, social, and economic foundations of the nation. The General Association declared that the seller of liquor was little

22 Indianapolis AM, 1854-1855; White Lick AM, 1854.

23 Esarey, II, 621-631, 646.

better than a murderer. Most of the new churches organized during this period included in their rules of decorum the statement that they would never extend fellowship to any one who sold or drank ardent spirits as a beverage. Exceptions were made only for the use of liquor for medicinal purposes.²⁴

There can be no doubt of the fact that the churches lost heavily as a result of their connection with the discredited "Know-Nothing" movement. It was not easy to allay national and religious prejudices once aroused. In consequence, a marked degree of disaffection and disinterestedness toward religious matters began to appear throughout the Baptist communion of the state. During the later fifties church membership did not keep pace with the increase of the population. The drinking evil seems to have become worse rather than better, and various sorts of heresy were increasingly prevalent.²⁵ According to one contemporary writer, the newspaper was supplanting the Bible, political discussion was displacing sermons, and violent partisanship was eliminating the attitude of calmness and serenity so essential

24 Bethel AM, 1855; Weasaw AM, 1857-1858; Indianapolis AM, 1855-1857; Freedom AM, 1859; Bedford AM, 1860; Flat Rock AM, 1858; White Lick AM, 1859; Little Pigeon AM, 1860; GAM, 1860; Edwardsport CM, 1858; Harbert's Creek CM, 1859. Many of the home-made herb remedies of the people were concocted on an alcoholic base; Franklin College permitted its students to possess whiskey for medicinal purposes.

25 Flat Rock AM, 1860-63; White Lick AM, 1860; Coffee Creek AM, 1864; Little Pigeon AM, 1860. The latter body, located in an area overrun with German Catholic immigrants, issued the following discouraging statement in 1860:

"Romanism . . . is struggling to . . . supplant the supremacy of the great head of the church with the fable of Popeish infallibility; there is scarcely a heresy or absurdity within the pale of Protestantism but has in our bounds its embodiment. . . . We stand as the lone representative of the faith once delivered to the saints."

for the devotional spirit.²⁶ Many congregations became exceedingly discouraged. In view of the gathering of social forces which were destined to shake the social fabric of the country to its very foundations, it is not surprising that Baptist congregations so intimately responsive to public feeling were not always able to maintain a proper balance and sanity toward public affairs. The slavery issue was destined to make the problem infinitely more difficult.

Indiana Baptists and the Slavery Issue.

Opposition to the institution of slavery among the Baptists of Virginia and Kentucky long antedated the organized abolition movement in New England. The General Committee of the Baptists of Virginia expressed itself on the subject as early as 1789, and many of the early Separate Baptist leaders of Kentucky were outspoken in their hostility to slavery.²⁷ The movement never gained wide proportions in Kentucky for two reasons. In the first place those men for whom slavery was distasteful migrated to free territory, and secondly, Associations and churches valued too much the preservation of their own unity to take a radical stand on the question. Elder John Taylor and other leading Baptists of early Kentucky owned slaves. The practice was justified by them on the ground that slavery was recognized in the Scriptures and that, since the church was not concerned with political matters, they could

²⁶ From a statement by G. E. Skaggs in the *Little Pigeon AM*, 1855.

²⁷ A Licking-Locust Friends-of-Humanity Association of Baptists was organized in 1807 in Kentucky, and continued active until about 1820. John Leland and David Barrow were early leaders of the anti-slavery Baptists of Kentucky. See *Gewehr*, 235-42; *Spencer I*, 183-85.

do nothing either collectively or individually to eliminate the system.²⁸

The introduction of slavery into Indiana was a matter of serious concern within the territory until 1809. The Northwest Ordinance provision against slavery did not, of course, settle the question. Five separate attempts were made to introduce slavery into the region, with the pro-slavery party succeeding in 1807 in enacting a territorial law permitting the holding of slaves in Indiana under a system of indenture for a period of thirty years or more. The emancipationist party won out in 1808, and the indenture bill was repealed in the following year.²⁹ Thereafter slave-holding within Indiana territory was outlawed.

Opposition to the institution of slavery found frequent expression among minority groups within the Baptist churches of Indiana. The Maria Creek church, in 1812, refused to grant membership to a slaveholder, although they were refusing to break their correspondence with Kentucky churches who included such persons as members. The Vernon church, in 1818, voted its disapproval of correspondence with slave-holding Baptists, but was unable to persuade the Silver Creek Association to take action on the matter. Similarly the Indian Creek church repeatedly sent unavailing protests to the Silver Creek and Laughery Associations. The following letter is an example:

"Dearly beloved brethren we feel ourselves much burthened

28 Sweet, 77-78: Mary Burnham Putnam, *The Baptists and Slavery, 1840-1845* (Ann Arbor, 1913), 12-15.

29 Putnam, 31-32, 89-99. From 1809 to 1824, a similar contest was waged in Illinois. Baptist leaders such as missionary John M. Peck and the Lemen brothers were strongly anti-slavery. The agitation was in decline by 1830. The boundaries of future Indiana state were set in 1809.

with the unchristian conduct of our kentucky brethren for selling our black brethren and sisters and for using the rod ins[t]id of the Gospel for correction this conduct we cannot fellowship the conduct is so numerous it becomes too tedious to mention therefore we wish you to advise some measure and recommend it to the kentucky associations so that the evil way may be dispensed with for if it is not there is a number will leave this Association and do not wish you to throw this under the table and slip over this evil for if you do we shall be under the necessity of braking right off."³⁰

Various methods were adopted by the different Associations to avoid the troublesome question. The Laughery Association in 1826 advised against the discontinuance of correspondence with Kentucky Baptists. When the matter was pressed before it again by the Willow Branch church in 1827, the Association made the rather ambiguous statement that "we have no fellowship with slavery." The anti-slavery group thereupon inquired whether they meant fellowship with slaves or with the oppressors of slaves. In an effort to force the matter to an issue, several anti-slavery churches eventually broke off correspondence with the Indiana bodies who did not agree with them in their stand. The Liberty Association was formed from such churches during the twenties, with its membership scattered from Switzerland and Jennings counties to Perry county, far down the Ohio river. A similar Jubilee Association also appeared in the southern counties. But the two groups together included only nine churches and about 350 members by 1833. When these figures are compared

³⁰ Silver Creek AM, 1823; Holman Correspondence, letter to Laughery Association, 1826. The Sharon church insisted in 1822 that some admonition on the evil practice of slaveholding be inserted in the corresponding letter of the Association to be sent to the Kentucky brethren. Sharon CM.

with the total of 300 churches and 11,000 members of Baptist bodies within the state for whom statistics are available in that year, it is quite apparent that the anti-slavery Baptists in Indiana were not leading a very serious revolt.³¹

There were other ways than by the passing of resolutions for expressing Baptist opposition to slavery. Along the lines of travel running from Madison to Vernon especially were to be found many persons who were quite ready to secrete runaway negroes, long before the deliberate formation of the Underground Railway. The Vawter Family are supposed to have participated in this work as did Elder John B. New of the Ryker's Ridge Baptist church, located above Madison.³² Settlers were continually moving into the state from the south because of their dislike of slavery. Judge Holman received a number of inquiries from such individuals in the early thirties.³³ In the Maria Creek and Fort Wayne churches negroes were charter members, and until the late thirties when the movement for separate colored churches began, persons of color

31 Laughery AM, 1826; *Holman Correspondence*, letters from Willow Branch and Bear Creek churches, 1828, 1830; I. M. Allen, *The United States Baptist Register and Almanac* (Philadelphia, 1833), 197-198. W. M. Pratt tells of a church being split in 1840 over the admission of a number of Kentucky Baptists.

32 Stott, 52-55; Vernon CM, August, 1818; *History of Ryker's Ridge Baptist Church* MS., 1-7. Signals were transmitted across the river to the fugitives by means of an anvil or a cow-bell. A number of the Home missionaries, like Eliphalet Williams and Dr. J. L. Richmond entertained strong anti-slavery views. *Franklin College-Half Century*, pp. 19, 21.

33 John Collier wrote to Holman from Demopolis, Alabama, September 4, 1833: "I am determined to move to a free state. I wish to raise my children free from the notion of slavery. . . . I see that the spirit of the South is incongenial to the spirit of the Gospel." He asked for information concerning the price of land and supplies, and health conditions.

were to be found in many white congregations. A colored congregation of Jeffersonville known as the Ephesian church was admitted to the Bethel Association in 1843.³⁴

For more than a decade after the initiation of the New England abolitionist movement around 1829, the Indiana Baptist churches were not noticeably affected by it.³⁵ The responsible leaders of the national Societies of the Baptists did everything in their power to suppress the issue, although many of the Home missionaries sent to the West held strong personal convictions on the subject. The Baptist General Tract Society required its agents in 1835 to pledge themselves not to meddle with the issue of slavery. The Foreign Mission Board likewise deplored the agitation as calculated to split the church. The Indiana churches seem not to have been represented at the meeting of the Triennial Convention in 1841, when a determined abolitionist minority from New England and western New York forced open consideration of the slavery question.³⁶

The historic national Baptist Convention of 1844 which made impossible a reconciliation between the

34 Stott, 52-55; Pratt's *Memoirs*, 1838; Indianapolis CM, 1838. J. M. Peck was obliged to hold separate meetings for negroes in St. Louis in 1823. See *American Baptist Magazine*, IV, 307-08. The following action for segregation was taken by the Spice Valley church of the Orleans Association in 1842: "The colored people should sit by themselves in the house of God."

35 This is not surprising in view of the facts that abolitionism did not originate in the churches and that much of the West was allergic to New England leadership in any case. The New England Anti-slavery Society was organized in 1832.

36 Putnam, 7-11, 22-28; McMaster, VI, 272. President Wayland of Brown University championed the majority resolution in 1841 which deplored the abolitionist petition and declared that the Convention had no right to concern itself with slavery.

Northeastern and the Southern points of view, could not be ignored by the Western Baptists.³⁷ The immediate reaction within most of the Indiana churches was anti-abolitionist. The *Baptist Banner* of Louisville, which enjoyed a considerable circulation within the state, demanded in 1845 that the seat of control of the Convention be removed to some more central location remote from the abolitionist fanaticism of Boston. The *Baptist Messenger* of Madison was expressly commended by the General Association in 1845 because it was not radical on the slavery question, which was "threatening mischief to civil and political institutions."³⁸ So tenuous was the connection of many of the Indiana churches with the national Societies that the division was a matter of no great importance to them for a number of years. Individually the congregations did as they pleased about the question, which frequently was nothing at all.

The churches most directly affected by the abolitionist movement were those whose antecedents were found in New England and New York. The Northeastern Association at the time of its organization in 1841 adopted a resolution deploring slavery. The neighboring Elkhart River Association took the following action in 1846, in direct response to the program of the Northern Baptist Convention:

"Whereas we consider the existence of American Slavery

37 Putnam, 30-33, 35-39; *Baptist Home Missions in North America*, 393-95. An immediate division was avoided at the Convention, but the demand to exclude slaveholders from missionary appointments made a break inevitable.

38 Putnam, 47-87; GAM, 1845. The Publication Society was obliged to discontinue the publication of its weekly paper, the *Baptist Record*, in order to maintain a neutral position. Isaac McCoy, now a resident of Louisville, attended the first session of the Southern Baptist Convention as a delegate from Kentucky.

a great moral evil, and a blot on our national escutcheon, Therefore,

"Resolved, That we recommend to all Christians to pray for its safe and speedy abolition, and that they use all prudent and gospel means for its accomplishment."³⁹

In southeastern Indiana, the anti-slavery movement centered around expressions of sympathy for freedmen and escaped slaves. The Eleutherian College was started by the Baptists of Jefferson county in 1847; James H. Cravens, the founder, played a leading role subsequently in the Free Soil party of Indiana. The Galatian negro Baptist Association was organized in 1848, and became immediately associated with the missionary program of the white Baptist churches.⁴⁰

The two factors during the fifties which apparently contributed most to the anti-slavery sentiment within the churches were the efforts to enforce the fugitive-slave law and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854. People who were otherwise unmoved on the slavery question resented bitterly the invasion of the negro hunters and the occasional operation of kidnappers in southern Indiana. The authority to force local authorities to cooperate in apprehending fugitives added to the feeling.⁴¹ The reaction arising from the Kansas-

³⁹ Northeastern AM, 1841; Elkhart River AM, 1846; Stott, 204.

⁴⁰ Stott, 204, 263-68; Galatian AM, 1849; Indianapolis First CM, 1838. An able negro leader named Moses Broyles, who purchased his freedom in 1854, received training in the Eleutherian College and later took a prominent part in the promotion of the Second Baptist church of Indianapolis. Four additional negro churches eventually developed from the latter organization. R. Bassett, Miles Bassett, and Broyles formed the Indiana Baptist Association of negro churches in 1858. There were three member churches in 1858, eight in 1864, fifteen in 1867, and more than forty in 1872.

⁴¹ Esarey, II, 611; Salamonie AM, 1853. The latter Association ruled against slavery because of the fugitive-slave law enforcement.

Nebraska Bill was much more immediate and widespread. The following resolutions of the Indianapolis Association are typical:

"We deplore the action of Congress in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, thereby extending the institution of slavery like a pall of death over our free territory.

"We believe it to be the duty of all Christians to use every effort to prevent the further extension of an institution so contrary of the Spirit of Christianity and so full of evil to the human race."

The General Association took an even more extreme position in 1856:

"Resolved, that we regret repeal of what is commonly known as the Missouri Compromise. . . . We protest against the usurpation—the wicked and high-handed measures—taken to force slavery upon Kansas.

"Resolved, that we are opposed to all forms of despotism and tyranny as anti-Scriptural and cruel: that we regard every species of bondage and domestic slavery as a sin against God, Religion, and humanity."⁴²

Other groups quickly fell in line. The Madison Association, who had carefully avoided committing itself on the slavery question until this time, threatened in 1857 to sever correspondence relations with all Baptist bodies who maintained any connection with slave-holding churches. White Lick Association denounced slavery in 1857 as a great national sin contrary to the principles of the Gospel. The Indianapolis Association in 1859 summoned all evangelical Christians and friends of civilization to repudiate the system which denied the elemental human rights of a man to the free use of his limbs, the product of his labor, and the expression of his own opinion.⁴³

⁴² Indianapolis AM, 1854, 1856; GM, 1856.

⁴³ Madison AM, 1856, 1857; White Lick AM, 1857; Indianapolis AM, 1859.

Such expressions of extreme hostility toward slavery did not, of course, represent the unanimous opinion of Indiana Baptists. In areas where Democratic partisanship was strong, a moderate attitude was maintained. Little Pigeon Association expressed themselves as follows in 1855:

"We wholly disapprove any interference with the subject of human slavery in such a manner as to interfere with the friendly relations that exist between us and the Associations with whom we correspond."

A minority of the churches continued amicable relations with the Kentucky Baptists even during the Civil War. Thus an ordination council meeting at Harbert's Creek in 1861 included a representative from a Kentucky church. The Laughery Association did not sever its correspondence relations across the river, and, as late as 1864, protested when such action was taken on the initiative of the Kentucky churches. Many Baptist folk who were willing to fight to preserve the Union were, nevertheless, not willing to allow the slavery question to be made a matter over which brethren should necessarily divide.⁴⁴

The Attitude of the Churches Toward the Civil War.

The issues involved in the Civil War included much more in the minds of the Indiana Baptists than any calculated opposition to the institution of slavery and to the extension of slave territory. Rebellion against the government of the United States, which they had repeatedly adjudged divine in its nature and origin, was a sin in itself entirely apart from other questions. The defense of democracy and the religious and political

⁴⁴ Little Pigeon AM, 1855; Harbert's Creek CM, July, 1861; Laughery AM, 1864.

liberties of America was of paramount importance. The great historic mission of the nation, they affirmed, was being challenged by the southern rebels. Baptist groups within the state, therefore, vied with each other in denouncing the Confederacy as the enemy of God and man, and the foe of all liberty and justice. The fact that such were also defending the institution of slavery aggravated their guilt, but it was probably not considered primary evidence of their sin.⁴⁵

During the early years of the war, not a few Associations adopted a decidedly penitent attitude in the face of its tragedy. The Coffee Creek Association declared in 1861 that the calamity which had overtaken the nation called for fasting and prayer rather than for partisan denunciation. It resolved:

"That in view of our national sin, and the dark cloud which is gathered over us, and the blood which flows in our midst, we advise all our churches to . . . humble themselves before God, and meet together and pray that we may avert the blow aimed at the life of the nation."

In the following year the same group still insisted that the struggle which they were waging with sin was their most important concern. The Weasaw Association was equally moderate in spirit, appealing to God to preserve the nation and expressing sympathy for all those who were mourning the slain. The newly organized Monticello Association called upon the churches repeatedly to humble themselves under the hand of God which was

⁴⁵ The Curry's Prairie Association in 1864 denounced the rebellion not because of its defense of slavery but because it threatened, "the destruction of the God-given government." President Bailey of Franklin College argued that many great movements in history had been realized through bloodshed.

punishing the nation for its sins of pride, sinful pleasure, oppression, and the neglect of Christ.

A circular letter of the Flat Rock Association, where Democratic sentiment was strong, gave a full statement on the situation in 1861. It declared that the causes of the war were "not all confined to the South or North, nor all attributable to slavery." They did not deny that the rebellion of the South was wicked nor did they hesitate to affirm that loyalty to God demanded the defense of liberty and independence, but they asserted that reproachful language and evil speaking were the primary causes. Until the churches could put their own houses in order by encouraging humility, repentance, and love even for their bitterest enemies, they could not expect much improvement in the world of political affairs. The Perry County Association in the southwestern corner of the state offered the following prayer in 1864:

"We pray the Lord to bless those soldiers of the Confederate service with special blessings, influencing them to return to the Union in peace and quietude, and renew their former friendship in all Godliness and honesty that we may again be a peaceable, quiet, and powerful nation, . . . and that all should receive their rights in the Union."⁴⁶

In a great many quarters, however, such moderate attitudes were not long tolerated by the churches. Partisanship refused to be curbed by Christian considerations. Anti-war Democrats were dubbed "Butter-

⁴⁶ Coffee Creek AM, 1861-1862; Flat Rock AM, 1861; Weasaw AM, 1863; Perry County AM, 1861, 1864; Monticello AM, 1861-1863. No reference can be found to the war in many of the church minutes. Coffee Creek Association commended *The Witness* for its earnest rebuke of the rebellion.

⁴⁷ Columbus CM, April-June, 1865.

nuts," and religious meetings which did not add fuel to the flame of war were often denounced as "Butternut raids."⁴⁷ So strong did the sentiment become in Judson Association in 1863 that only those who were loyal to the government at Washington were invited to participate in their annual meeting. The Long Run Association declared in 1865 that the leaders of the rebellion deserved no more sympathy from civilized men than did Satan when he rebelled against Heaven. The resolution declared:

"They who do not heartily sustain the Government in its efforts to subdue the rebellion are esteemed by us as being in league with the Southern Confederacy, and as being our personal enemies, enemies to our children, to their country, and to God."

The Columbus church in 1863 voted to withdraw fellowship from all members who sympathized with the Southern rebels. The White Lick Association in the same year denounced political demagogues who were opposing the war, and declared their "cordial approbation of the arrest and punishment of those in the North who with voice or pen would thwart the efforts of the government and thus aid those who seek to overthrow the republic."⁴⁸

It required only one additional step to interpret the war itself as a special manifestation of divine providence. The hand of God was discerned "using the wrath of man for the accomplishment of grand designs." Others rejoiced that the national crisis had united the Christian people of the loyal states in proclaiming the

⁴⁸ Stott, 240, 247; Columbus CM, October, 1863; White Lick AM, 1862-64. In 1864, the White Lick Association denounced all secret organizations, political or military, who were seeking to embarrass the government.

principle of human freedom, and the "Bible doctrine of the duties of the Christian citizen." The "God of battles" was implored to strengthen the Northern armies; church meetings were dismissed to participate in military parades. Collections for the care of sick and wounded soldiers in some churches exceeded those for missionary causes. Most of the churches responded with regularity to the successive appeals of the President for the observation of days of prayer and fasting.⁴⁹

✧ The bitterness engendered by the war overshadowed all other concerns of the churches in the closing days of the conflict. The rebellion was denounced as without cause or provocation, being prompted solely by wicked impulses with the "avowed purpose of building up a Southern aristocracy founded upon human slavery." Such an enterprise proved, in their minds, that those who did not heartily support the Union were also enemies of man, betrayers of their country, and rebels against God.⁵⁰ Even the occasional exhortation for the conquest of souls, as found in the following resolution, was couched in military terms:

"Where is the conquest? Why is there not a report of more victories gained, more prisoners brought in? . . . A thousand soldiers of Jesus . . . in a campaign of twelve months, and only twenty-eight prisoners are reported to have been taken! We fear, greatly fear, that we have not 'put on the whole armor of God.'"⁵¹

The following resolution of the White Lick Association

49 Indianapolis AM, 1863; White Lick AM, 1863; Sand Creek AM, 1862; Laughery AM, 1863-1864; Edwardsport CM, July, 1864; Franklin CM, August 1863; Vernal, June, 1864. Bedford AM, in 1862, declared that the existing form of the national government was "in keeping with the Holy Scriptures and sustained by the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

50 SCM, 1864; Sand Creek AM, 1864.

51 Sand Creek AM, 1863.

reveals an attitude of serious concern lest religious things be completely forgotten:

"Whereas the existence of Civil War . . . and domestic commotion are all calculated to try the faith of Christians and . . . by reason of their exciting character to draw off our thoughts from God . . . by reason of the infirmities of the flesh, therefore,

"Resolved, that we owe our highest holiness and permanent allegiance to God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour; and that His religion lies nearest to our hearts, and is dearer to us than even country or nationality, or any earthly consideration; and that we urge upon our brethren the great necessity of preserving our church integrity, and to guard against the danger of being distracted and weaned away from Jesus by the excitement that pervades our land."⁵²

The bad effects of the war were not generally appreciated at the time.✱ Many religious folk confused religious zeal with wartime enthusiasm, and maintained a fairly optimistic attitude. Not a few Baptist leaders confidently asserted that God was pointing the American people to a higher destiny. Said the State Convention in 1864:

"The nation is . . . throwing off a terrible incubus, as a strong man to run a race. She is wiping out, or God is wiping out for her in spite of herself, a foul stain upon her escutcheon, and so we are anticipating for her a career of higher and holier efforts at home and abroad."

Various religious activities in connection with the conflict, such as the Christian Commission working for the relief of the sick and the wounded soldiers and the activities of the Baptist Home Mission Society in the

⁵² White Lick AM, 1864. Similar conditions prevailed in Laughery Association, where the war years witnessed an average of only twenty-four accessions annually for all fifteen churches.

South, particularly, were cited as proof of the dawning of a new day.⁵³

But the view of those who had the courage to examine the actual condition of the Baptist churches was inescapably a pessimistic one. Disorders, both political and religious, had multiplied in nearly every congregation. Associations bemoaned the conditions of "languishing faith, and conformity to the world," thus sacrificing values more precious "than even country or nationality." In many areas more than three-fourths of the churches were rendered pastorless. No younger men were being enlisted to take the places of those who had retired from the ministry, and the churches were so embarrassed by building debts and by lack of financial support that a large number of them practically ceased to function. Even in the stronger churches, the pastorates during the war were exceedingly brief and irregular. There were many earnest folk who seriously doubted whether religious institutions and the cause of morality in general could ever recover from the losses sustained. The Long Run Association lamented that "truly we have fallen upon evil times."⁵⁴

53 SCM, 1861, 1864; Bethel AM, 1864; Laughery AM, 1865; Vernal CM, June 1864; *Report of the American Home Mission Society*, 1864. Upon application of the War Department, the Home Mission Society was granted the use of unoccupied Baptist church property within the areas occupied by the Northern armies. The program conducted was a part of the effort to enlist local sympathy. Transportation, subsistence, and protection of the missionaries was provided by the army. Such practices did much to establish a permanent barrier between Northern and Southern Baptists.

54 White Lick, Laughery, Long Run, Weasaw, Flat Rock AM, 1860-1865; Valparaiso CM, 1861-1865; First Prairie Creek CM, 1862-1864; Columbus CM, 1864. Only two of the twenty churches in Flat Rock Association enjoyed full-time preaching in 1863, and thirteen had irregular services. All but three of the White Lick Association churches were pastorless during

When the war finally dragged to a close the Baptist churches were left with little spiritual vitality to combat the terrific moral let-down which ensued. Franklin College had suffered the loss of nearly all of its students as well as the dissipation of its funds. President Bailey resigned at the end of 1862, and all activities at the college were suspended in June of 1864. The General Association had been reorganized as the Baptist State Convention during the period of the war. It was maintaining its existence with great difficulty, and was doing practically nothing to promote the cause of missions in the state. Thus the denomination was denied the two sources from which leadership might normally be expected. The public, furthermore, was too fagged emotionally to respond to a faltering religious appeal. The thousands of youth under twenty who returned home from the battlefield were not easy to influence religiously and the problem was aggravated by the rapid development of urban life and by the arrival of additional thousands of European immigrants. The leaders of the Convention were confronted with the task of rebuilding the entire structure of the denomination in all of its phases during the post-bellum years.

the entire war. The Middlefork church held only nine business meetings in 1863-1864, and transacted almost no church business during this period.

CHAPTER VIII

RECOVERY MEASURES

Conditions After the War.

The Baptist churches of Indiana emerged from the Civil War in a lamentable condition. They had lost much ground due to the lack of material resources and leadership; they had sacrificed even more in moral authority and dignity. The surrender of the churches to the war psychology and their efforts to rationalize their belligerent attitude in religious terms involved great spiritual damage. The ordeal of war had hardened and embittered rather than elevated the participants. It had been brutalizing in its effect and benumbing to charitable instincts. It gave birth to a kind of Pharisaical cult which took for granted the moral superiority of those who had preserved the Union and had eliminated the curse of slavery from the land. The piety and worth of the nation, henceforth, was conceived, in the minds of many people, to be confined to the Republican party. The deception inherent in such an attitude is reflected in the blindness of the churches to the injustices of the carpet-bag rule in the South and their insistence that the post-war amendments be forced upon the "unrelenting" rebels. Wounds were inflicted during this period which have never healed.¹

¹ *The Baptist Standard*, 1869; Indianapolis AM, 1866; W. E. Garrison, *The March of Faith* (New York, 1933), 2-32. War-time phraseology persisted in the following obituary notice of the Vernon Church in 1876: "Regimentals unstained by a single spot of treason against the government of Christ."

Religious folk shared in the general reaction from the strain of four years of warfare. They were fagged out emotionally; disillusionment was everywhere in evidence. Instead of a new social order emerging from the conflict, as had been so confidently predicted, there was political debauchery in high place and in low. The population craved extravagant excitement, while personal and business ethics steadily degenerated. Phrases such as the following reflect the apathy which prevailed within most churches:

"Little depth of fervor;" "languishing faith"; "worldly conversation"; "We pray that our candle will not go out."²

Belligerent exhortations for the churches to "rise and battle with sin and heresy in all its forms" no longer had any effect upon jaded spirits. Almost ninety-five per cent. of the churches had failed to contribute to Home missions during the war, and the most active Associations did not average fifty dollars a year in their giving. Indiana seems to have suffered greater loss of missionary interest than any other Middle Western state.³

A final difficulty lay in the fact that a different set of policies and a new technique had to be devised to meet changing social conditions. The day of the frontier and the camp meeting was gone, and it would not be sufficient merely to restore the standards of the pre-war days. An entirely new beginning must be made in

² Monticello, Laughery, White Lick, Flat Rock AM, 1863-1870. The following report is typical: "Sunday Schools are in want of teachers, their libraries worn out. . . . Meeting houses are few and uninviting, and the Ministers of the Gospel are compelled to give one-half of their time to secular employment to live. . . . No wonder the churches dwindle."

³ Reports of the HMS, 1863-1864; Salamonie and Elkhart AM, 1863-1964. The Baptists of Michigan and Minnesota, for example, gave proportionately four times as much as did those in Indiana.

the urban centers. An investigation made by the Convention in 1867 revealed the fact that more than one-half of the county-seat towns were entirely unoccupied by the denomination, and that the cities were rapidly outgrowing the religious facilities available. It also showed that only 196 pastors were serving the 433 churches affiliated with the Convention. Less than ten per cent. of the churches with pastors had full-time preaching. Church organization, worship forms, buildings, and the training and recruiting of ministers must henceforth be geared more and more to the needs of the cities. For such a program local leadership even on an Associational basis was entirely inadequate.⁴

The Revival of the State Missionary Work.

The organization of recovery efforts within the state naturally fell to the successor of the old General Association. The latter had been made over in 1863 as the Baptist State Convention. The new constitution provided that the directive power should be vested in a Board of Managers of sixty members, each affiliated Association being represented. An Executive Committee of seven persons headed by a Corresponding Secretary and a General Agent and responsible to the Board, was entrusted with the supervision of the missionary program of the organization.⁵ For some time, the Convention labored under the handicap of having to fit its activities in somewhere between that of the local Associations on the one hand, of which ten or a dozen

⁴ SCM, 1867.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1863-64, 1869-71. The Executive Board was increased to 30 members on 1871, every Baptist pastor within the state being made automatically a member of the Convention. The negro Association was represented in the person of Moses Broyles.

were attempting missionary activities, and the work of the Home Mission Society on the other. With meager support to begin with, and with no program of its own on which to base an appeal for contributions, the Convention for several years found itself unable to keep a single agent continuously employed.⁶

A plan of cooperation with the Home Mission Society was worked out in 1867 by which the Convention was permitted to share in the direction of the work of the Society in Indiana. The State Board received duplicate copies of the monthly report of the resident Home Mission agent, and assisted at its regular quarterly meetings in deciding what fields should be cultivated and what proportion of the cost should be borne locally in each case. In order to make contact with domestic missions also, the Convention asked the Associations to report the extent of their missionary work for the year.⁷

The plan worked pretty well as long as the Home Mission Society continued its aid. During the first year it supported fifteen, and during the second seventeen missionaries in important centers such as Bedford, Vincennes, Greencastle, Shelbyville, Richmond, and Rochester. Local contributions both to the Society and to domestic missions notably increased. In 1869, the Society decided that Indiana Baptists should be strong enough to stand alone. The number of missionaries was abruptly reduced to five, and these, for the most part, were assigned to work among alien German elements of the population. An immediate backset ensued, for the state agencies were not prepared to take over the

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1865-1866. A Rev. Ames served as agent in the first year, and after him Rev. F. D. Bland.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1867; *Home Mission Society Report*, 1867.

burdens which the action of the Society forced upon them.⁸

For two years the Convention struggled along discouragingly with its task. Rev. S. M. Stimson was put in charge of five collecting agents who were employed for a uniform daily wage and sent out to canvass for funds. They encountered a storm of opposition, largely on the ground that they took their own pay from the contributions received. Less than \$2200 was collected. At the close of the year, Stimson and others of the agents resigned. During the following year, 1870-71, the Convention tried the experiment of dispensing with all salaried agents. The responsibility for soliciting funds was assigned to various members of the Executive Board, now increased to thirty in number and distributed uniformly throughout the state. This plan proved hopelessly inadequate, only \$1050 being realized. It was clear that the business of the Convention made the employment of a regular salaried agent an indispensable matter. In 1871, therefore, the old plan of cooperation with the Home Mission Society was broken off, and Rev. Joseph Brown was employed as directing agent.⁹

Rev. Brown served the Convention for five years. It was due largely to his efforts that the state work secured recognition. Concentrating his attention upon areas which had not been cooperating in the work, he emphasized vigorously the primary claims of the Convention upon Baptist benevolent contributions. Where pastors were not willing to aid him, he made the Board members in the Association responsible for convening

⁸ GAM, 1867-69. In 1868, the Indiana churches contributed \$3900 as compared to \$1800 from the Mission Society. Associational missions expended \$4500 during the year.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1869-1871.

missionary meetings at which the program could be presented. Executive committees for state work, Sabbath Schools, and education were organized in 1872, and full statistics covering thirty Associations were compiled for the first time. The number of contributing churches increased steadily, from 80 in 1870, to 112 in 1871, and 240 in 1874. In spite of the prevailing hard times, the income of the Convention was maintained at around \$4,000. Overhead expenses were kept so low that the Convention could assist the work in fifteen or twenty important centers.¹⁰

The middle seventies witnessed the complete discontinuance of regular forms of Home Mission aid to the Baptist churches of the state. Generous recognition was given in 1876, however, to the invaluable assistance which the Society had given. During four decades of service \$73,750 had been appropriated for work in Indiana, comprising 274 full years of ministerial labor. Of this sum the Indiana churches had returned less than forty per cent.¹¹ It is difficult to see how the cause of missions and a more enlightened program could ever have prevailed without this outside aid. The Home missionaries had furnished the primary impetus in the organization of the General Association and in the founding of Franklin College. They had nursed along a score or more of the strongest churches in the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1870-76. Brown was a native of Rhode Island and a graduate of Yale. At the time of his death in 1878, he left a legacy of \$1,000, which was the beginning of the endowment fund of the Convention. His stimulating influence is reflected in the minutes of a dozen or more Associations from 1872 to 1875. Rev. F. M. Huckleberry wrote of him: "He was a most excellent preacher, . . . logical and clear in his thought and as tender as a child."

¹¹ SCM, 1876. From three to four full-time missionaries were maintained after this date among German and Swedish groups, to 1912.

state during their infancy, and in every respect had provided the leaven of progress.¹²

For almost a decade after the retirement of Joseph Brown, the direction of the state work devolved upon the shoulders of W. N. Wyeth and A. J. Essex, the first acting as Secretary and the second as financial agent of the Convention. It was they who established a number of the fundamental policies which served for years to govern the program. They refused to heed indiscriminate appeals for aid if there was no evidence of definite willingness on the part of a petitioning church to help itself. Selecting only those fields which showed definite promise, they afforded adequate and continuous support until the work was firmly established. Ministers lacking in persistence and natural ability were not enlisted for such work. The Convention also assisted churches in building projects, requiring that mission churches should seek the advice of the Board before undertaking such extraordinary expenditures, and should contribute a fair share of the amount locally.¹³

The work of the Convention proper continued practically unchanged until the end of the century. Its income remained relatively constant during the period, the considerable increment of church revenues being absorbed in local salary and building expenses, in the missionary enterprise, and in the development of Franklin College.¹⁴ Rev. William Elgin served creditably for

¹² Haskins, *Activities of the Baptists in the Northwest Territory, 1815-1850*.

¹³ Among the churches aided were: Bloomfield, Petersburg, Attica, Elkhart, Rochester, Crown Point, Jeffersonville, South Whitley, Greenfield, Flora, Oakland City, Greensburg, Sullivan, Kendallville, Frankfort, Hymera, Westville, Anderson, Bloomington, Kokomo, Crawfordsville, and Muncie.

¹⁴ Stott, 307-311. Annual budgets ranged from \$3500 to \$5,000.

a short time following Wyeth's departure in the eighties and the work eventually passed into the trustworthy hands of Rev. Albert Ogle and R. E. Neighbor, the latter being the Indiana editor for the *Journal and Messenger*.

The work of the Convention was so largely confined to directional matters and to the fostering of programs in the larger centers of population that it did little to aid the hundreds of faltering rural churches. Community churches and the union of parishes were proposals not considered. In so far as these smaller churches were rescued from the slump following the war, that result was attributable to the rapid development of the Sunday Schools in which lay-leadership could be largely employed. For this phase of the work, the Publication Society and not the State Convention was primarily responsible.

The Sunday School Movement.

The rapid development of the Sunday School movement after the Civil War was one of the most important religious events of the period. The program in Indiana coincided generally with the rise of the secondary school system throughout the state, and was at first sponsored by an interdenominational Indiana Sunday School Association, which was organized in 1865.¹⁵ For several years the Baptists did not share actively in it, although they cooperated at various times in the operation of some fifty or more union schools.

In 1867, a Baptist Sunday School Convention was organized with Rev. J. R. Osgood as the first President. Vice-Presidents were to be elected from each Baptist

¹⁵ Walter S. Athearn, *Indiana Survey of Religious Education*. Two volumes (New York, 1923), I, 471-472.

Association. Through the solicitation of this body, a regular agent of the Publication Society was assigned to the state on a more or less permanent tenure. The Sunday School Convention had no direct control of the agent, however, and that organization ceased to exist as a separate body after Osgood's death in 1871.¹⁶

Under the leadership of Rev. E. A. Russell, who served for fifteen years as the resident agent of the Publication Society, Baptist Sunday Schools expanded rapidly in number and size. He was active everywhere, popularizing the cause, organizing new schools, distributing literature, convening Associational Conventions, and conducting sectional institutes on methods. Efforts were made to assimilate the schools into the regular church program by organizing Bible classes and by soliciting Sunday School contributions to every phase of denominational work. The local bodies responded enthusiastically. By 1876, Russell was able to report 542 Baptist schools in operation with almost 60,000 students enrolled. The negro churches were later included in the program. Although there is some reason to doubt the care with which the statistics were gathered, and even more reason to suspect that much of the mushroom growth was not very substantial in character, the development was none the less phenomenal.¹⁷ The Sunday School movement was acclaimed by the Convention in 1882 as "the most hopeful and promising field of Christian labor within the bounds of our state."¹⁸

A readjustment became necessary in Baptist Sunday

¹⁶ SCM, 1868, 1871-1885.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1868-1878. Only 150 schools were reported in 1868.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1882-1883. The Baptists outdistanced the Methodists in Sunday School work during this decade.

School work in the early eighties. The rapid growth of the previous decade and a half had been lacking in adequate organization and in definition of purpose and content. From some quarters, came the demand that cooperation in union schools be discontinued and that increased emphasis be given to purely Baptist doctrines. These and other reasons led the State Convention to ask, in 1882, that it be allowed to control the activities of the agent of the Publication Society. After a series of negotiations it was finally agreed that the State Board should direct the work of the agent, the latter being permitted to solicit contributions for the Society from Baptist churches throughout the state to the end that the cause would pretty largely sustain itself. During the period of transition, Rev. Russell resigned and a local laymen, S. H. Huffman of Seymour, took over the Sunday School agency, a position which he held for almost a quarter of a century.¹⁹

Huffman was well qualified for his task. He was indigenous to the state, a staunch Baptist, and a vigorous man of much practical sense. Somewhat lacking in education, and not a professional minister, he was nevertheless an effective speaker and efficient in his work. One of his insistent requirements was the keeping of complete and accurate statistics, including class rolls and collections, the number of meetings per year, and the average attendance. The thoroughgoing report which he presented before the Convention in 1885 revealed that only about two-fifths of the churches maintained Sunday Schools the year round. The average per Sunday attendance was well below 20,000.

Huffman expanded his program in a variety of di-

19 *Ibid.*, 1882-1885.

rections, concentrating all the while on missionary aspects of the work. He was not content to promote schools within the churches, but initiated the organization of scores of mission schools in unoccupied city areas. From a number of these schools, strong churches eventually developed.²⁰ He revived the Sunday School Convention in 1887. In 1889, a site on Pine Lake near Angola was acquired with a view to establishing accommodations for an annual summer Assembly or Baptist Chatauqua. The project was abandoned after two years' experimentation. He then began the practice of holding Associational Sunday School Conventions in the spring, followed by a state Convention in June. Children's day and Bible day were introduced as well as a normal course for teachers' training. Home Department work began in 1894. By the end of the century, the grading of schools and a regular promotional system were being established. Huffman also had much to do with the introduction of Young People's work in 1891. The sending of colportage agents into the state after 1900 afforded additional assistance to the program of the Publication Society.²¹

The Revival of Franklin College.

Much of the recovery realized by the Baptist churches of Indiana after the Civil War can be attributed to the initiative assumed by laymen in such projects as Sunday

²⁰ He reduced the number of schoolless churches from 150 to around 45. The Connersville church began as a mission Sunday School.

²¹ SCM, 1885-1900; Stevens, 66-67. The grading of lessons was undertaken by the Publication Society as early as 1884. Huffman was greatly assisted in the introduction of various progressive measures by Rev. U. M. McGuire, who served for many years after 1896 as chairman of the Sunday School Committee of the State Convention.

Schools, prayer-meetings, the promotion of city missions, and in evangelistic work in general. There was often no one else to do the work.²² The church could not thus depend indefinitely upon untrained leadership, however. Lay members who were completely immersed in the welter of secular life could not be expected to attain the objectivity of viewpoint and clarity of thought which prophetic social leadership demanded. The necessity of enlisting and training a professional ministry with ability and insight sufficient to comprehend an increasingly complex social situation was recognized by all thoughtful Baptist churchmen. This meant that schools must be maintained and that the churches must be trained to assume greater financial burdens for the support of a professional ministry.²³

A short step in the direction of ministerial training was made in 1866, when a Baptist Ministers' Institute was convened in the unoccupied college buildings at Franklin. A Pastor's Union began to meet regularly in connection with the State Convention in the following year. Such sessions contributed to the development of a professional morale and doubtless afforded some instruction, but they were quite superficial.²⁴

Not one of the denominational academies scattered

22 Huffman is a good example. The trustees of the Indianapolis church took a vigorous lead in promoting local missions.

23 Sand Creek AM, 1867; Laughery AM, 1869, 1878. A report of the Education Committee of the State Convention in 1868 ran as follows: "Indiana . . . must raise up and educate her own ministry. And until we put our hands to this work, in vain will we look for a brighter day to dawn upon our churches."

24 Sand Creek AM, 1866; SCM, 1869 ff; Vernon CM, April 1872, January, 1875. A special Ministers' and Laymen's Association was organized for southeastern Indiana in 1875.

throughout the state was centrally located or enjoyed adequate support. New ones which had been started at Mitchell in 1864, at Crown Point in 1865, and at Huntington in 1868 were encountering great difficulties. Orland Academy was much too remote; Ladoga Seminary was faltering badly; and younger schools at Rome (Spencer county) and Evansville were showing no promise. Three Associations in the southeastern quarter of the state, Coffee Creek, Sand Creek, and Madison, were making a forlorn effort to conduct a school in the buildings of the defunct Eleutherian College. Franklin College seemed hopelessly dead, and Indianapolis leaders were strongly opposed to its revival, advocating the establishment of a men's school in the capital city as a companion institution to the fairly prosperous Indianapolis Female Institute. Few if any of these schools could be expected to survive the competition of the prospective system of public high schools. Baptists were not disinterested in education, but their energies were badly dissipated.²⁵

After canvassing educational possibilities, the leaders of the Convention concluded, in 1868, that Indiana Baptists had better not try to have a school of their own but should send prospective ministers to the Baptist schools in neighboring states. Accordingly, support was solicited for students in attendance at Shurtleff College in Illinois, Denison in Ohio, Kalamazoo in Michigan, and the Theological Institute in Chicago. Approximately

25 Indianapolis AM, 1869-70; Weasaw, Bedford AM, 1866; Sand Creek, Coffee Creek, Northern AM, 1868; Perry County AM, 1867-70; Stott, 341-344. John Kenower of Huntington met the chronic deficit of the academy there. Evansville and Perry County Associations both shifted to the support of a short-lived Glendale Academy in 1870.

thirty students per year were helped. The practice was continued for some two decades.²⁶

The revival of Franklin College was the work, not of the State Convention, but of the surviving members of the old Board of Directors and of the people of the immediate community. The old properties were renovated, the academy which had been occupying the building was turned out, and classes were started in 1869.²⁷ Because of the lack of support from the denomination, the first effort to resume studies at the College proved abortive.

Dr. Heman L. Wayland, the son of the famous President of Brown University, was called as the new President, but he was obliged to resign early in 1871. Thus the College again closed its doors after less than two years of operation.²⁸ It looked as if the task was hopeless. But interested residents of Johnson county rallied, liquidated the outstanding debt, and called Rev. W. T. Stott, a native Hoosier and graduate of the College, to the Presidency. The school was open for students in the fall of the same year, and it has maintained its program without a break since that day.

President Stott assumed an unrivalled place of leadership in Baptist educational affairs. His policy

26 Northern AM, 1868; Monticello AM, 1869, 1871; SCM, 1868-69. Fifteen such students were at Shurtleff in 1868.

27 SCM, 1868-1874. Indianapolis Baptists opposed the project. As late as 1874, they offered to raise \$500,000 for the establishment of a rival University of Indianapolis. Critics demanded that proper deference be shown to "the centers of intelligence and influence and the brethren of large and consecrated means." See *The Standard* of Chicago, Sept. 16, 1869.

28 From 1867 to 1869, the College buildings were occupied by a private school, largely commercial in character, operated by William Hill and Jeremiah H. Smith, alumni of Franklin, and formerly of Ladoga Seminary. See Cady, *Franklin College*, chapter IV.

was conceived in broader terms than the promotion of Franklin College alone. As Chairman of the Convention's Executive Committee for Education, he solicited aid for ministerial students wherever in attendance. Such candidates at Franklin received tuition free.²⁹ As local educational projects died out in various parts of the state, the President was able to enlist the interest of the entire constituency in the successive endowment and building campaigns of Franklin College. He assembled an able and loyal faculty and raised the educational standards of the institution to near top rank within the state. Starting from scratch in 1871, he maintained a high grade program, and retired after thirty-five years of the Presidency with all bills paid and with an endowment of \$300,000 in hand. Stott Hall, connecting the two older buildings, and the College Library were built during his regime. He operated the school on a very modest salary, without the aid of deans, and himself regularly taught three classes a day five days a week. He excelled both as an executive and as a teacher.

Under the guidance of President Stott, the College became an integral part of the denominational program. Assisted by Rev. Norman Carr, who served for many years as financial agent, he carried his appeal for co-operation effectively into every corner of the state. His funds and his students came from Baptist sources. Only two Associations, for example, failed to contribute funds to the building of Stott Hall in 1887-1888.³⁰

²⁹ SCM, 1872-1879. Wabash and Rochester were included in this program. About half of the ministerial students were in attendance at Franklin, in 1879. Stott argued that it was futile to pray for a better trained ministry unless the churches were ready to aid those already in preparation.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1877-1888. Based partly on information furnished by Judge Charles H. Remy, a former student of Stott.

It would be too much to claim that the traditional prejudice against an educated ministry was entirely broken down. Protests to the effect that the gospel was in no way dependent for its success upon scholastic training or intellectual development still found occasional expression at Associational gatherings.³¹ Nor was it easy in many places to secure acceptance of the rather obvious conclusion that ministers who were relatively successful without the advantages of education would have had their usefulness greatly enhanced by it, as in the case of other professional classes. From his point of vantage, the President repeatedly protested against the licensing of unqualified men as ministers and the practice of the churches in enticing ministerial students away from College before they had completed their studies. He persuaded the Convention to recommend that ordination councils be made more widely representative and that candidates be expected to take the fullest possible course of preparation. But the churches continued, of course, to do very much as they pleased.³² It was obviously impossible to prove to aspiring ministers the necessity of a thorough educational training, when many churches had little appreciation of it.

Any thoroughgoing improvement in standards of

31 Laughery Association in 1879 and Coffee Creek Association in 1875 and 1880 voted to withhold support from the College because of doubts concerning its program. The first-named body had declared in 1870 that the neglect of study produced results which grieved the well-informed, misled the ignorant.

32 SCM, 1884-85. An extended report on the question was submitted by Stott, Wyeth, and G. H. Elgin. The Ryker's Ridge church near Madison replied that they would withdraw from the Convention if the right of individual churches to ordain was called in question. At periodic intervals, the students' fund slumped badly.

ministerial education had to await the gradually rising cultural level of society generally. Baptist parents were not more slow than others in seeing the necessity of educating their children for other areas of professional and business endeavor, if not for the ministry. Said the Curry's Prairie Association in 1880: "We are persuaded that if we are to remain a leading, progressive, and successful denomination, we must educate our children equal to the best." Dependence for improvement on such gradual processes made inevitable, of course, the eventual development of marked tension within a denomination such as the Baptist where cultural lags operated to make the course of development far from uniform. It would be difficult in any case, however, to evaluate fully the contribution that President Stott made through the College to the enlightenment of the churches during his long career.³³

Missionary Work and the Women's Movement.

So engrossed were the Baptists of Indiana in their own local tasks after the war, that they gave comparatively little attention to the work of the general missionary societies of the denomination. Of the two, the Home Mission Society suffered the greater neglect, especially after it withdrew most of its missionaries from Indiana in 1870. For a number of years contributions to this phase of the work practically ceased, the State Convention deliberately diverting to its own use such funds as had previously gone to the Society.³⁴ The interest

³³ SCM, 1890-93; Curry's Prairie AM, 1880. Other examples may be found in Sand Creek AM, 1896; Monticello AM, 1887; Union AM, 1874.

³⁴ SCM, 1871-75. The First Church of Indianapolis voted formally to discontinue assistance to Home Mission work in 1875. As late as 1882, the cause occupied no place in the budget.

in foreign missions was greater, enjoying fairly constant support. But the general level of regular contributions remained during the seventies very low.³⁵

The revival of serious interest in the missionary cause can be attributed in large measure to the influence of the women's organizations. The church societies were a phase of the feminist movement which was sweeping over England and America in the post-Civil War period. They occupied a central position between the radicals clamoring for political and social equality on the one hand, and the conservative "Daughters" societies and cultural clubs on the other. One of the first groups to appear was the Women's Baptist Mission Society of the West, in 1871. It was concerned primarily with the elevation of the status of womanhood in non-Christian lands. A local Society was organized in the Indianapolis church in 1873. The participation of the women in social tasks nearer home was signalized by the appearance of the W. C. T. U. in 1874, and by the projection of religious work among the colored women of Indianapolis in 1875.³⁶ During these same years, women began to be accorded equal rights in determining church quorums for business purposes, and were for the first time appointed as delegates to Associations. The State Convention first gave definite recognition to the women's work in 1874.³⁷

35 *Ibid.*, 1871-82. Thanks to several legacies, the foreign missions contributions totalled \$21,000 for the years, 1871-75. Rose H. Adams and Mr. and Mrs. Clarke went to Burma from Indianapolis in the late sixties; T. J. Keith and Miss Mary Thompson enlisted later.

36 Garrison, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 109; *Baptist Home Missions*, pp. 514-518.

37 Indianapolis CM, 1873; Sand Creek AM, 1874. Equal rights were not accorded women in some churches until after 1900.

Promotion of the work of the foreign mission organization was in the able hands of Miss Eusebia Cravens of Greensburg. Ladies' circles and children's bands were formed throughout the state and a vigorous educational program undertaken with reference to the needs of mission work in foreign lands. The aggressive feminist spirit of the movement was reflected in the following report given by Miss Cravens in 1879:

"There may come a time when no separate women's auxiliaries will be needed. It will be a golden age when the educating influence of women's societies shall have been so felt, that every pastor will take and read the missionary magazine, . . . and there will be definite ideas of the grand work at which Christians have only been playing."³⁸

An early suggestion that every Baptist woman in the state should contribute at least one additional dollar to the foreign mission fund produced an additional \$700 in 1877. By the end of the decade there were 72 circles, 14 children's bands, and seventeen active Associational secretaries at work. The women were accorded a regular place on the program of the State Convention in 1878.³⁹

Revival of interest in Home Mission work was associated with the activities of one Harrison Woodsmall, a native Hoosier, who was working among the negro people of Georgia and Alabama.⁴⁰ In 1876, he

38 SCM, 1874-1879. Said she in 1877: "A glorious most responsible work is ours." Miss Cravens later became the wife of Mr. S. M. Stimson.

39 *Ibid.*, Sand Creek AM, 1879; Curry's Prairie AM, 1879, 1883.

40 SCM, 1888. Woodsmall was a lawyer by profession and a native of Owen county. He remained in the South following his discharge from the Union army and studied at Greenville Seminary in North Carolina. He then accepted employment under the Publication Society and the Baptist Convention of Georgia.

was invited by negro leaders of Alabama to conduct Institute work in that state. Eventually he undertook to direct the teaching program of a negro institution at Selma, called the Alabama Baptist Normal and Theological School. Upon applying to the Baptist Home Mission Society for aid, Woodsmall found that his appointment was conditional upon his enlistment of the support of the non-cooperating Indiana churches for his work. Thus the appeal came before the State Convention and the Associations to help support their own missionary in the work among the freedmen of Alabama. Endorsements were secured from about half of the Associations. By a compromise arrangement made in 1877, the Mission Society assumed responsibility for Woodsmall's salary in exchange for permission to solicit contributions among the Indiana churches. It was primarily the influence of interested women that forced the Baptist bodies within Indiana to give heed to Woodsmall's appeal.⁴¹

The school at Selma was opened in January, 1878. Through the work of Miss Aurette Hoyt, who acted as agent in Indiana, around \$500 was contributed during the first year. A number of young women, most of them from Franklin College, volunteered for teaching service in the school.⁴² Even after the Home Mission Society increased its aid after 1880 the support was insufficient. Woodsmall's health broke under the burden; the school closed in 1882. With its failure the short-lived interest of the Indiana Baptists in freedman's work dis-

41 SCM, 1877-1882. Among the bodies approving were Sand Creek, White Lick, Indianapolis, Monticello, Curry's Prairie, Coffee Creek, Laughery, Union, Long Run, Orleans, Weasaw, Bethel, and Flat Rock Associations.

42 SCM, 1877-82.

appeared.⁴³ The home Mission cause gained reëntrance into the state, although it was still lagging far behind other denominational enterprises.⁴⁴

A separate women's society for the promotion of home mission work was organized at Chicago in 1877.⁴⁵ Its interest was centered particularly in the Baptist Training School at Chicago, which specialized in training young women for work among the immigrant and foreign populations. It early became associated with the general Home Mission Society. From slow beginnings this new women's society gained rapid acceptance in the eighties.

Mrs. Reuben Jeffrey was the leader of the society in Indiana. She developed a program varied in character and direct in its appeal. She promoted study programs among young people's organizations, young ladies societies, and children's bands. Mite boxes were widely distributed. Work among alien immigrants of the northern cities of the state was begun, and support solicited for a school for colored women known as Shaw University. The Indiana auxiliaries also endeavored to

43 Woodsmall spent his last years editing the *Baptist Pioneer* of Memphis. He died in 1888 at the early age of forty-seven, his remains being buried at Franklin, Indiana. The college dedicated a window in its newly completed chapel to his memory, and the State Convention paid a glowing tribute to his moral courage and his sense of humanity. See *Baptist Home Missions in North America*, 456-7; SCM, 1888.

44 A report by Professor Columbus Hall in 1880 revealed that 286 churches were contributing to the State Convention, 115 to the Publication Society, 103 to foreign missions, and only 38 to home missions. 188 Baptist churches were contributing to no missionary object whatever. SCM, 1880.

45 Another Women's Home Mission Society also appeared in Boston in 1877, a circumstance which caused considerable confusion for several years. By an agreement of 1880, the work was divided, the Boston Society concerning itself primarily with negro work in the South. *Baptist Home Missions*, 519-522.

support Miss H. J. Steadman as their missionary working in New Orleans. In city areas, they worked to secure qualified police matrons and to relieve needy families. The work soon equalled in extent that of the older women's foreign mission society.⁴⁶

The effectiveness of the women's movement was due largely to thoroughness of organization. It stressed educational measures and adapted its program to meet current opportunities and needs. Monthly meetings for the study of such subjects as foreign religions, social conditions in mission lands, life among Indians, negroes, and aliens at home were conducted among various age groups with serious regularity.⁴⁷ The type of Associational machinery which they perfected was later copied by the Sunday School and Young People's organizations. The women, furthermore, greatly stimulated the local church programs. They canvassed the membership for current expenses; they purchased organs, pews, and carpets, and financed the remodeling of committee rooms.⁴⁸ But their greatest contribution was to recall the churches to their missionary task. As in the days before the war, the missionary movement provided objectives for the churches beyond their immediate con-

46 SCM, 1882-89; MS. records of women's missionary societies of Indianapolis and Franklin Churches. Contributions for home missions were \$2100 in 1888 as against \$1856 for foreign missions. The College took advantage of the situation in the eighties by seeking an endowment for a "Women's Professorship."

47 Minutes of the Indianapolis Women's Missionary Society; Northern Indiana AM, 1883.

48 SCM, 1886-1909. Miss Cravens continued her work until 1901, and Mrs. Jeffrey somewhat longer. Miss Myrtie Huckleberry took over the Junior B. Y. P. U. work in the nineties and continued in it until her death in 1937. Associational minutes all reflected the activity of the women, as do church minutes. The ladies of the Franklin church raised no less than \$6400 from 1882 to 1907.

cerns, in the meeting of which they gathered strength for all their other tasks.⁴⁹

The Baptist Young People's Union.

What the women's organizations did to make their membership an aggressive factor in the churches, the Baptist Young People's Union accomplished for the young folk. To some extent this new organization, which appeared in 1891, was the outgrowth of the work which the women had begun among the older children during the previous decades. The Indianapolis church had conducted young people's prayer services as early as 1869. But more directly it was in imitation of the Christian Endeavor movement, which had been launched in 1881 on an interdenominational basis.⁵⁰ Except for churches in the southeastern corner of the state, the Baptists were more or less suspicious of the unionist character of the Endeavor movement and desired an organization of their own.⁵¹ A mass meeting was held for the young people in connection with the State Convention of 1890, that body cooperating in the appointment of a committee to draft a constitution and by-laws for a "Young Peoples Alliance." This document was to be acted upon in the following year.

Before the next Convention met, however, a national Baptist Young Peoples Union was organized at Chicago, in 1891. Several Indiana churches sent delegations. Rev. W. F. Taylor of Indianapolis addressed

49 The *per capita* contribution of the Indiana Baptists to missions increased from almost nil in the early seventies to an average of 4.7 cents from 1879-85, 8 cents from 1885-95, and 11.4 cents from 1895-1905. See Stott, 319-320.

50 According to Smith (251) a number of Baptist pastors in Kansas really initiated the B. Y. P. U. See also Garrison, 103.

51 Laughery AM, 1881-82, 1890.

a session, and Professor J. W. Moncrief of Franklin College was elected as one of the officers of the body.⁵² The Indiana constitution, which was accepted at the State Convention in the following autumn, was modelled on the same broad, inclusive lines laid out by the national body. Membership was open to the constituencies of all evangelical churches. The program of activities as originally outlined was largely missionary in character, a considerable fraction of the annual dues being designated to sustain a prospective state evangelist. The agents of the Publication Society took an active part in promotional work. The B. Y. P. U. spread with great rapidity over the state during the nineties. A junior union made its appearance in 1896, absorbing the work previously carried on by the women in the Temple Builder's Guild. Associational gatherings began the practice of devoting one entire evening session to young people's work. District rallies were inaugurated for the spring of the year with a state-wide rally in the summer, a movement which eventually developed into the summer Assemblies at Pine Lake, Franklin, and elsewhere. Indiana repeatedly sent large delegations to the international Conventions of the B. Y. P. U., and several times carried away banners for the best work done in the prescribed courses of missionary study.⁵³

The Need for Coordinating the Program.

The development of so many new types of church activity by the Baptists of Indiana augured well for the

⁵² SCM, 1890-91; Greensburg CM, 1891; Laughery AM, 1893; Stevens, 61-64. The Publication Society sponsored the Chicago meeting.

⁵³ SCM, 1891-1902; Sand Creek AM, 1892, 1897, Laughery AM, 1894-95; Union AM, 1896-98; Logansport AM, 1896. 322 delegates from Indiana attended the Milwaukee meeting in 1896, Mr. L. A. Clark of Crawfordsville being the leader.

religious vitality of the denomination. But a process so spontaneous and uncontrolled created difficulties of organization that were inescapable. No central control existed to which all were responsible and there was no clear definition of a common goal. The competition for funds was the most serious immediate problem, producing a kind of jealousy among various agents and resulting in a considerable amount of wasteful duplication of effort.⁵⁴

Various practices were followed in distributing benevolent funds. Special collections were often taken at Associational gatherings for each of the more important types of missionary work. If any special enterprise wished to be sure of sharing in the contribution it was practically obliged to have a representative present. Many Associational programs, therefore, became little more than a series of pleas from various agents. In some of the better ordered churches it was the practice to take up quarterly missionary collections, these being distributed to the State Convention, Publication Society, Foreign, and Home Mission Societies respectively. But Franklin College and several other projects also shared largely in the funds.⁵⁵

The first step toward a solution was taken in 1885 when a systematic plan was proposed by which the Associations of the State were grouped into four geographical areas. Each was to divide its missionary contributions by quarters between four accepted enter-

⁵⁴ This problem was clearly defined by Rev. Henry Day in 1875 before the State Convention. President Stott jokingly remarked before one Convention meeting that even the missionary agents loved each other.

⁵⁵ See Union (1873), Northern (1869), Weasaw (1876), Judson (1873-81), Laughery (1885-86), Bethel (1881) AM. Sand Creek Association in the nineties divided its benevolent collections nine different ways.

prises, Home Missions, Foreign Missions, the State Convention, with Sunday Schools and Education grouped together. Each agency was to have one quarter of the state assigned to it for three months, the areas to rotate during the year. Managing Boards for home and foreign missions, Sunday Schools, and education were created in 1888 to direct the canvasses, and each Association was asked to appoint a local board of its own to cooperate with each of the various benevolent objectives.⁵⁶

But the relations between these various agencies were often not very cordial. In 1895, Rev. Ogle took them severely to task for not confining their appeals to the proper areas during the year. Particular trouble was later experienced with the effort of one or two groups to monopolize the activities of the Young Peoples Union.⁵⁷ Neither was there any provision by which numerous other agencies were permitted to gain contact with the churches in a regular and systematic way. Not until the second decade of the twentieth century was a general budgetary system adopted.

⁵⁶ SCM, 1888. Rev. E. Ellis headed the Home Mission agency, S. M. Stimson the Foreign Mission one, S. F. Huffman the Sunday Schools, and Rev. Norman Carr was financial secretary for the College.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1888, 1895.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH ENTERS A NEW BUSINESS AGE

The Changed Social Situation

The closing decades of the nineteenth century were noted for the strenuousness with which Americans devoted themselves to the development of material resources of their country. This process was pushed almost to the point of ruthlessness at times.¹ The public land of the frontier was quickly absorbed and the population began to fold back upon itself. Easy outlets were no longer available, as heretofore, in times of economic distress. Rapid industrial development in conjunction with chronic agrarian distress caused the phenomenal growth of urban centers.

The movement from country to city in these and succeeding decades became, in time, almost as significant as the westward migrations had been in the earlier days. It produced factory and mining communities of a type hitherto unknown in the central valley of America. Ambitious individuals from the farm took the lead in promoting and managing the new business enterprises, while multitudes of European immigrants were drawn to the New World to provide the cheaper forms of labor which the American population did not readily supply.

1 A spokesman for Laughery Association said in 1878: "We live in an age of intense activity. . . . Life now is terribly earnest and practicable. Men are active in every pursuit of life whether it be in the acquisition of wealth, the strife for pleasure, the pursuit of learning, or in any of the secular callings of the hour; and no means are left untried for the consummation of their purposes."

The Puritanical caste of frontier religious life, with its primary emphasis upon the virtues of industry and thrift, no doubt contributed much to the intensity of the economic program. Before the older rural culture of the Middle West had had time to mature and stabilize itself, it faced the impact of the forces of a new industrial order. Scientific and mechanical achievements began to dwarf the significance of the religious concerns of the older society.

Indiana shared directly in practically every phase of this rapid economic change. The valuable coal deposits in the lower Wabash valley produced scores of mining towns where labor problems became very acute. Trouble became so serious at Brazil and Knightstown in 1873, for example, that troops had to be called in to stop the rioting. Many agricultural communities in the southern part of the state, where milling, lumbering, and river trading industries had been centered, declined in relative importance, while industrial cities in the central and northern portions gained steadily. Southern counties, furthermore, received a steady stream of recruits in the form of arrivals from across the Ohio river or from alien groups of Catholic German and Irish stock. Slaughtering industries, foundries, cooperage making, and the manufacture of furniture and fertilizer assumed increased importance. From 1860 to 1880, industrial production in Indiana more than trebled, and the movement was then only getting under way.² In the nineties valuable deposits of natural gas were

² Esarey, 1022-27, 1044-1046, 1072-1076. There were sixty-six million dollars of capital invested in 1880 as against eighteen million in 1860. Industrial production was one hundred forty-eight million as opposed to forty-two millions. Whereas Floyd county and New Albany had been the industrial center in 1860, Vanderburg, Marion, Vigo, Wayne, St. Joseph, and Lake counties were rapidly gaining in 1880.

tapped in the east central portions of the state, which produced a mushroom growth of a number of cities.

The influence of city life inevitably relaxed the effectiveness of social control. The ties which had held together the basic family institution, protective, economic, educational, and recreational, were steadily dissolved. Foreign immigrant groups brought city-dwelling Americans into contact with social and ethical standards quite different from those which had been accepted by frontier society. To many of the tendencies of the new order, the Baptists raised violent protests, although in the end they could not avoid becoming a party to its aggressive materialistic spirit.

The Decline of Church Discipline

Some of the changes brought about by altered social conditions can be traced in the records of the disciplinary practices of the Baptist churches. Immediately following the Civil War the demoralization of society was so thoroughgoing that strenuous measures had to be taken to bring the membership under control. Drunkenness was disturbingly prevalent, and sexual irregularities were a frequent matter of church action. Members were also obliged to face charges of thieving, fighting, and gambling. The records of a half dozen widely scattered churches reveal cases where pastors themselves were obliged to stand trial for such offenses as wife desertion, the defrauding of creditors and bondsmen, fraudulent tax receipts, misappropriation of public funds, profanity, and even threats of murder.³ Such a lamentable state

3 Coffee Creek AM, 1865; Harbert's Creek, 1867; Edwardsport, 1864-65; First Prairie Creek, 1868; Columbus, 1865-67; Middlefork, 1877; Burns City, 1870, 1877-83. The Greensburg church, in 1874, excluded a brother for coming to prayer meeting drunk.

of affairs cannot be duplicated in any other period of Indiana church history.

The measures which were taken to correct such moral aberrations were necessarily unpleasant and difficult to administer.⁴ There was always a danger that personal animosities should develop and that a spirit of self-will and pride should assert itself.⁵ The consideration of flagrant offenses before open church meeting had eventually to be abandoned in favor of the functioning of prudential committees, variously chosen. Church trials were rarely resorted to after the 1880's. To a certain extent this was due to the gradual achievement of more orderly conditions within the congregations, but it also indicated the relaxation of arbitrary standards.

The most serious problem of discipline was that connected with the drinking evil. The rules of decorum of many churches were amended to condemn habitual drinking in any form, as well as the entering of saloons, or the maintenance of any personal or financial connection with the business. Associational gatherings were particularly violent in their expressions of opposition to the liquor traffic.⁶ So emphatic and unanimous was the opposition to this

4 The settlement of private differences by the churches had practically ceased before the war. Survivals may be seen in the conviction of a physician for extortionate charges at Greensburg in 1865, and in prevention of members of Ebenezer church from going to law with each other, in the same year.

5 Elder John Stott, father of W. T. Stott, gave eloquent warning against these dangers before the Sand Creek Association in 1866.

6 Columbus CM, 1874, 1895; Edwardsport CM, 1865-83; Mt. Pleasant CM, 1881, etc. Curry's Prairie Association, in 1882 recommended excluding any person who signed a license petition, voted to sustain the traffic or was financially interested in the business. Coffee Creek Association excluded a church in 1900 who permitted its members to engage in the liquor trade. See also Bedford AM, 1866; Laughery AM, 1877.

business that drinking, after 1880, came to be a serious offense within the Baptist churches. The attack was finally projected toward the outlawing of the industry as such.

Considerably more difficulty was experienced with regard to dancing. The churches at first seemed not to have condemned the practice absolutely, for there was usually a minority who were not convinced of its baneful character under all circumstances.⁷ Action was usually taken at intervals against a considerable number of persons at once, which suggests that the practice was to a certain degree connived at. Complaints on this ground were quite numerous, however, and continued to be raised long after action against drinking had disappeared.⁸ An extreme ruling on the subject was the following, voted by Middlefork church in 1884:

"Believing the modern dance and ballroom contrary to the Bible and spirit of the Gospel and demoralizing upon the Christian profession, any member attending a dance or Ball shall be visited, and failing to make public acknowledgements to the Church shall be excluded."

Kindred social practices such as card-playing and theatre-going were usually condemned along with dancing. Sunday baseball and Sunday newspapers were sometimes included. The White Lick Association placed croquet playing in the forbidden list in 1875, and one pastor lectured to his boys on the evils of "playing

7 The Madison church, in 1866, for example, ruled that dancing was "questionable," and the Columbus church in the same year cited a member "for dancing on the Sabbath."

8 Otter Creek church experienced quite a struggle over the question from 1882 to 1885, actions on this item exceeding all other offenses combined. In 1879, the rule against "fiddling and dancing" was temporarily rescinded. Harbert's Creek tried eleven cases in 1879-82, and Liberty church thirteen, in 1891-92.

marbles for keeps."⁹ Puritanism was deeply embedded in the conscience of the church, and it continued for many years to operate effectively among the older congregations. It was nevertheless obvious that the disciplinary power of the churches as a whole was gradually declining. The *mores* of the frontier days were giving way to the less arbitrary standards of city life, and religious sanctions generally were losing their power.

The obvious disadvantages of bringing disciplinary matters of a scandalous nature before open meetings led a number of churches, as early as the middle seventies, to adopt the policy of appointing a "peace" or "prudential" committee.¹⁰ This practice became general before the end of the century.¹¹ The task of the prudential committee was invariably a disagreeable one. In early instances, the work of revising the roll was carried out in a very vigorous manner, all absentees and non-contributing members being summoned to give an account of themselves before the church.¹² When objections to such methods were raised, the practice finally degenerated into a purely routine affair, repeated at intervals

9 Monticello AM, 1896, 1908; White Lick AM, 1875; Logansport CM, 1895; Sand Creek AM, 1896. Said the latter body: "The social dance, the theatre, and the card table are recognized by the consensus of moral sentiment . . . as baneful to spiritual life and Christian influence, . . . invoking the wicked . . . devices of Satan." Not until the 1920's was the taboo against dramatic performances in the churches generally withdrawn.

10 Vernon CM, 1876; Hopewell CM, 1874; Kingsbury CM, 1875. Veritable orgies of discipline frequently took place, as at Blue River, 1867-68, Columbus, 1865-67, Greensburg, 1876-79, and Bloomington in the eighties.

11 Middlefork CM, 1891; Butlerville, 1894; Scottsburg, 1895; Columbus CM, 1893; Coffee Creek CM, 1884.

12 The Indianapolis church cited more than 100 delinquent members, from 1878 to 1881. Aggrieved members later secured a rule forbidding the making of charges in open meeting.

of from four to eight years. Continuous absence for two or more years or failure to contribute for a like period were usually sufficient to warrant exclusion. Direct supervision of conduct, except on rare occasions, practically disappeared.¹³ A tactful and conscientious committee might do much to maintain order, but the church ceased to function as a court.

✕ Baptist churches suffered heavily through attrition. Periodic revision of the rolls invariably brought to light the heavy losses sustained. Scores of names were dropped without specifying any charges against them except that of indifference. Many churches kept supplementary lists of inactive members whom they hoped in time to reclaim.¹⁴ Many of the members would periodically claim the right of refusing to support a pastor whom they did not like, whether from personal or conscientious considerations. Capable pastors were hard to secure, and few churches would press the delinquency of the malcontents to the point of exclusion.¹⁵ The *de facto* loss of jurisdictional authority by the churches might have been more disastrous had it not been for the persistent moral training being carried on through the Sunday Schools and other educational agencies. But the earlier practice of forcing erring members to make public acknowledgment before the congregation and to receive, in return, its gracious forgiveness was an ex-

¹³ Indianapolis First Church revised its roll in 1878-81, 1892, 1899, 1906. Harbert's Creek church did it in 1881, 1886, 1889, 1897, 1901, 1913.

¹⁴ Valparaiso erased 87 names from 1908 to 1914; Columbus erased 22 in 1912. Individual disciplinary action ceased in Blue River church after 1881, in Vernon after 1888, in Scottsburg after 1902.

¹⁵ The Logansport church, in 1919, gave an erring member the privilege of apologizing for his conduct in writing if he did not care to appear before the church in person. Such a concession would have been impossible a century before.

perience, whether good or ill, for which there was certainly no substitute in religious education or in the routine revision of the rolls.

There is little evidence from the records of the last three decades of the century that the churches were greatly concerned over doctrinal questions. Merely a vague profession of faith in Christ was required of candidates for membership, they being no longer required to relate their experience before the church as had been the case in the earlier days. Controversy concerning the doctrine of election or the practice of close communion occasionally arose, but the New Hampshire Confession usually provided a satisfactory compromise.¹⁶ On the whole, a more cordial relationship was maintained with other evangelical bodies than heretofore. Meeting houses were freely shared, and union services of various sorts were quite common in the more progressive communities. Baptist doctrines were emphasized in educational activities, but they were not often made the subject of open controversy.¹⁷ The breaking down of provincial exclusiveness was a gain which resulted from the changing social conditions.

The Attitude of the Churches on Social Questions

As the attention of the churches was gradually

16 The Bloomington church was thrown into complete confusion from 1870 to 1872 over a series of doctrinal sermons. Middlefork church conducted a heresy trial in 1879. The question of the infallibility of the Bible was argued at Vernon in 1880.

17 Scores of minute books attest these facts. The Publication Society emphasized the use of Baptist literature, but denominational peculiarities were not emphasized. Both the *Journal and Messenger* and *The Standard* were liberal in their influence. Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Friends, and Disciples united their worship with Baptists at times, but free exchange of church letters was very rarely practiced.

diverted from matters of internal discipline, they came more and more to concern themselves with public questions. The early Baptists had been drawn from humble working classes, and had been strenuously opposed to all vested interests. This viewpoint found an able exponent, following the war, in the person of Hon. William S. Holman, the son of Jesse L. Holman and a former student at Franklin College, who was a distinguished Congressman from Indiana for many years. In a memorable address delivered at the College commencement in 1871 he called attention to the humble origins of the Baptists and affirmed that the level of any civilization was to be measured by the condition of its laboring people. He clearly predicted that the ownership of the means of employment and appropriation of the fruits of production by a comparatively few men would inevitably lead to an unjust preponderance of wealth in America, and called upon the Baptists to be true to their traditions and to throw the entire weight of their influence against such a development.¹⁸

But the dangers to which Holman referred were too remote to be generally appreciated at the time. There is little evidence to suggest that they were widely shared among the Baptists, for the records contain no expressions of sympathy for the striking labor unions in the seventies. Conspicuously absent also is any reference to such organizations as the Grangers and the Patrons of Industry, who were very active in the state.¹⁹ The individualistic tradition of frontier days, with its

18 W. S. Holman, *Capital and Labor* (Washington D. C., 1871). W. S. Holman Jr., his son, was several times President of the Baptist State Convention. President Wayland, who presided at the Commencement in question, was an avowed Christian Socialist.

19 Esarey, II, 1035-1039, 1047-1057.

passion for property ownership, was far stronger among the Baptists than was their sympathy with the cause of the industrial working classes.

From first to last, the major issue for the churches was the suppression of the liquor traffic. Its terrible depredations on society following the war were open for everyone to see, and it presented a vulnerable target which was open to attack on political grounds. Before the Civil War ended, the Convention was exhorting preachers to thunder against the evil. Scriptural passages were brought forward to condemn the "unholy and damnable traffic." It was denounced as the "strongest monopoly for evil the world has ever known." Almost every form of social problem was blamed upon intemperance. It was declared responsible for causing 90% of all crime, besides filling both the alms houses and asylums of the nation. The demand for legal regulation developed remarkable momentum during the seventies.²⁰ Some slight gains were realized as a result of petitions of united Protestant bodies in 1871 and 1872 asking that the seller of liquor and the owner of saloon premises be made legally liable for damages resulting from intoxication.²¹ In 1874 the W. C. T. U. got under way. The agitation was further pressed by the Murphy Temperance Movement. The latter was accorded wide endorsement among the Baptists, and several Associations arranged mass meetings under its auspices. So intense did the excitement become, in 1878, that the current lack of spiritual vitality was attributed in some quarters to preoccupation with the temperance fight.

²⁰ SCM, 1864-1879; Bethel AM, 1866-89; Coffee Creek AM, 1892; Flat Rock, AM, 1883. The loss of life attributable to drink alone in the decade following the war was declared to be greater than those killed in battle.

²¹ SCM, 1871-73.

Others, however, professed to see the hand of God in the temperance revival.²² By 1882, the question was pushed by united church action to the point of demanding that the legislature submit a prohibitory amendment to the constitution for popular referendum. But the economic and political power of the liquor interests was too strong, and a licensing system was the only gain realized.²³ Prohibition agitation declined for a time after 1882, and the attention of the churches was eventually shifted to a tangential phase of the problem.* It did not take much insight to see that the political power of the liquor traffic lay, to a large extent, in the ever-increasing tide of European immigration. The newcomers did not share the *mores* of the older frontier stock concerning the evils of drinking, and many German and Irish, in particular, were directly interested in the liquor business as had been the case before the war. Both of these groups were predominantly Catholic. The decade following 1883, therefore, witnessed a second marked revival of nativist feeling within the churches.²⁴

Catholic parochial schools were especially attacked. Feeling mounted to a fever pitch in the early nineties when the Catholic authorities made repeated efforts to secure a portion of the common school funds as well as the Federal grants for Indian schools. Alarmists declared that the free institutions of America would crumble if Catholics were allowed thus to subvert the public schools to their purposes. Their object was declared to be

22 Monticello AM, 1877; Curry's Prairie AM, 1878; Orleans AM, 1878.

23 Curry's Prairie, Long Run, and Laughery AM, 1882.

24 Said the Laughery Association 1892: "Every year there is dumped on our shores more than a half million of human beings from other lands, most of them Godless and ignorant of the claims of the Christian religion. Crime is on the increase." Free thinking was also attributed to such influences.

nothing less than "the destruction of freedom and the establishment of the rule of the anti-Christ." The time-honored Baptist principles of democratic government and the separation of church and state were involved as well as the deeply rooted hatred and fear of the Roman church.²⁵

The controversy was somewhat aggravated by the fact that many churches also attributed the growing laxity with regard to Sabbath observance to the loose standards of the Roman church on this matter. Church records of the eighties are full of protests against Sunday trains and newspapers, picnics, excursions, bicycle meets, and baseball games. A strenuous effort was made in 1893 to prevent the opening of the Chicago World's Fair on Sunday. Repeated attempts were made to curb Sabbath violation by advocating legal regulation. The State Convention, in 1904, for example, petitioned the legislature to prohibit Sunday baseball games within two miles of a church. The efforts of the churches along these lines seem to have had very little effect generally speaking, in spite of extravagant assertions by some that failure in this regard would endanger all true morality, and even the civil government itself. All Associational pronouncements admitted that the desecration of the Sabbath continued to be on the increase. The churches at best were beating a stubborn retreat.²⁶

The following pronouncement by the White Lick

25 SCM, 1869, 1884-88; Indianapolis AM, 1875; Sand Creek AM, 1891; Ft. Wayne AM, 1893, Central AM, 1895. The State Convention, in 1869, had denounced the "unholy alliance between the Rationalists, who hate the Bible and the Romanists, who fear the Bible, to exclude it from the public schools."

26 The use of real wine at the mass and the frequent resort to lotteries as a means of making money were cited as obvious proofs of the moral degeneracy of the Roman church.

Association in 1899 is typical of a score which could be sighted:

"Whereas many professed Christians, as well as the non-professors, make the Holy Sabbath a day for recreation, pleasure-seeking, visiting, gaming, etc., therefore, Resolved, (1) That we regard such desecration as an outrage upon the conscience and an insult to civil and religious liberties, (2) That we now promise, before God, in Association assembled (a) To personally strictly observe the Christian Sabbath as a day of rest, Bible reading, meditation, and attendance upon the worship in God's house, striving . . . to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, (b) To use our influence to secure better observance of the day among people in the neighborhoods and towns in which we live."

Another social issue of some moment was brought to the attention of the Baptists of the state in the middle eighties, in connection with the announcement of the Home Mission Society that it proposed to extend its operations into the polygamous Mormon communities of the state of Utah. The general condemnations of polygamy naturally brought with it an accompanying denunciation of the increasingly prevalent practice of divorce. The latter question became a burning issue in Baptist circles throughout the central part of the state from 1886 to 1890, in connection with the divorce and remarriage of a minister of the Indianapolis Association.²⁷ The cry against Mormonism was revived around the turn of the century when several polygamous congressmen were elected. The State Convention demanded in 1902, that Reed Smoot be excluded from the Senate on the

²⁷ SCM 1884-90. It culminated in the formation of the new Central Association. A church retaining as a member a person divorced for unscriptural reasons was declared to be outside the pale of Baptist fellowship. The Johnson County Association appeared shortly thereafter, in 1891.

ground that his first allegiance must certainly be to his office as President of the Mormon Apostles, which group had failed to stamp out polygamy as they had previously promised to do. A constitutional amendment was advocated making polygamy a crime. For a number of years, thereafter, Mormonism was included along with intemperance, Sabbath desecration, gambling, and Romanism, as one of the moral perils of the time.²⁸

The appearance of the Anti-Saloon League in 1895 breathed new life into the Prohibition cause, which had been relatively dormant since 1882. The licensing system, by that time, was thoroughly discredited, and the time seemed ripe for a united advance of all Protestant churches against the evil. The State Convention appointed two representatives to attend the annual meeting of the League in 1896, and urged all the churches of the state to give support to the movement. A standing committee on temperance was later appointed to represent the Baptists on the Board of Directors of the League. The political methods of the new organization quickly brought results. Through the use of the general remonstrance, about 600 saloons were closed in the state by 1903. Township option had made dry 650 of the 1016 units in the state by 1906, and further gains were promised by the passage of a county option law in 1908. Five-sixths of the counties were dry in 1909.²⁹

Moving along in the wake of the Prohibition movement came an anti-tobacco crusade. The smoking and

28 SCM, 1901-1902, 1907; Logansport CM, 1900, Sand Creek AM 1903; Monticello AM, 1899; Union AM, 1903. The use of slot machines, and gambling at county fairs were frequently condemned. A standing committee for the suppression of vice was appointed by the Convention in 1899.

29 SCM, 1896-1909. Minutes of Monticello, White Lick, Fort Wayne, Logansport, Central, Associations.

chewing of tobacco, which had been almost universal in frontier times, began to be seriously criticized in the seventies. The Women's organizations were not slow to point out how much good might be accomplished if the money spent by the men for tobacco were only given to missions. More serious pressure developed in the nineties. The habit was denounced as symbolic of the demoralization of the times, damaging to body, mind, and soul. One Association declared that no man addicted to the use of tobacco was worthy of ordination. The movement apparently lacked momentum of itself, however, being merely carried along by the growing Prohibition sentiment.³⁰

A final social development during the closing decades of the century was the gradual segregation of negro Baptists into churches of their own race. Their withdrawal from the white churches was usually amicable, although social pressure was undoubtedly a factor in it. The number of negro Baptist churches in the state increased from thirty-one to almost double that number during the seventies. White brethren frequently rendered assistance in getting them started. A tenuous connection with the main body of the Baptists was maintained by the negroes until near the end of the nineties through association in Sunday School work and by the inclusion of their statistics in the annual reports of the Convention. Flagrant instances of discrimination were apparently rare,³¹ and several of the churches in the northern part of the state continued to include negroes as members.

30 Ebenezer CM, 1872; White Lick AM, 1871; Indianapolis AM, 1880; Coffee Creek AM, 1894; Logansport AM, 1897; Union AM, 1903.

31 A bad situation developed at Bloomfield in 1894, when the pastor resigned because several people refused to admit some colored people to membership.

Fraternal relations with the State Convention were revived in the period following the Great War, half the salary and expenses of a negro state missionary being paid from the general state funds. The rapid trek of negroes northward during this post-War era, enlisted direct missionary assistance in the Calumet district, but the task of gathering churches was rapidly outstripping the efforts put forth in all of the principal urban centers.³²

The Development of New Institutional Standards

The demand for new institutional standards on the part of the urban churches affected both the character and the type of emerging leadership within the denomination. The rather limited area within which the social conscience of the church functioned during the last quarter of the nineteenth century can be attributed in large measure to the unfamiliarity on the part of the essentially rural leadership with the problems of urban society. Men with farm background became the leaders of both business and religious activities within the rapidly expanding communities. Increased social and economic position could easily be interpreted as evidence of superior qualities of character and industry. In a period of rampant commercialism, it was not difficult even for essentially pious folk to regard prosperity as a peculiar sign of God's favor.³³ Where heavy financial

32 Union AM, 1874; Bloomfield CM, 1894; SCM, 1869-1928. The usual appropriation for negro work from 1921 to 1928 was only \$1000 to \$1200 in total budgets of \$60,000 to \$70,000. The negroes had seven Baptist Associations and 155 churches in 1927, six of them over 1000 in membership. Rev. William Z. Thomas was their missionary during the twenties.

33 See R. H. Johnson, "Western Baptists in the Age of Big Business," *Journal of Religion*, XI (1931), 67-88; Butlerville and Bear Creek CM, 1909. The following report was made

outlays were required for building purposes and for institutional management, administrative experience and wealth came to have fully as much prestige as spiritual capacities could command. No longer did the city Baptists pride themselves on being the poor man's church. The office of trustee gained in importance when occupied by prominent business men.

The influx of people into the cities created manifold problems. The situation called for expert pastoral ability to coordinate a varied church program and to keep contact with the many new arrivals into the community who might easily drift away from all church connections. Larger and more expensive buildings were required to accommodate the activities, and to keep pace with the standards of other denominations. The usual result was a disproportionate expenditure for material equipment at the sacrifice of providing adequate pastoral care. Eighty-eight Baptist meeting houses of substantial character were dedicated from 1889 to 1901, and greater outlays were in prospect. Budgets grew by leaps and bounds.³⁴

The State Convention frequently became involved in problematical building operations because of its policy of nurturing churches in strategic centers until they became well established. They could not withdraw, as a rule, until the congregation was properly housed. An Indiana Church Building Association was organized in

before the State Convention in 1899: "The spirit of commercialism which is so dominant in our country is affecting our churches. The almighty dollar was never so almighty as now. Our people are mad on the question of finance."

³⁴ The total annual expenditures of Baptist churches within the Convention was around \$300,000 in 1899 and \$440,000 in 1907. Comparatively small congregations frequently undertook building obligations of from \$10,000 to \$25,000. The Indianapolis First Church cost around \$200,000.

1890, and an ediface fund started to which men of large means were asked to contribute.³⁵ On a few occasions, the permanent funds of the Convention were loaned to churches on mortgage security. This practice was discontinued in 1902 after the Convention had been obliged to assume the title of the church building at Gas City, along with additional debtor obligations.³⁶ All building projects and other extraordinary expenditures of mission churches had to be approved by the State Board. In 1904, state colporters and other agents were forbidden to proceed with the organization of any new churches likely to need state aid, without express permission from the Convention authorities.³⁷

Before the church buildings were paid for, new financial demands were sure to accumulate. Insurance must be provided, electric lights and furnaces installed, the water and sewer connections made. Sidewalk and street improvements frequently involved the churches in heavy expenditures. Then there would be a parsonage to purchase and maintain, Sunday School facilities to provide, and possibly a pipe organ to install. The usual result was that pastors' salaries were kept so low that the best ability within the congregations could not be attracted into the local ministry. In educational training, intelligence, and practical experience, the pastoral talent ordinarily available fell below that of the

35 SCM, 1892-1896. Work was begun in the natural gas area at Anderson in 1892, at Gas City and Elwood in 1893, and at Alexandria in 1896. Foreign work was begun among the Swedish people in South Bend in 1897.

36 The Gas City church declined to recognize its obligation for paying either principal or interest on the loan from the Permanent Funds. (SCM, 1901-1902). Churches were usually required to contribute toward buildings an amount at least equal to state aid received.

37 SCM, 1902-1908. City missions were later included within the ruling.

best of lay leadership. Many churches were obliged to undergo fairly long pastorless periods in order to catch up with their indebtedness.³⁸ The State Convention made repeated but fruitless efforts from 1898 to 1905 to introduce greater efficiency and direction in the calling of pastors and greater care in the ordination of ministers.³⁹

It was inevitable that the problem of raising money should become a matter of primary concern in almost every church. The payment of regular contributions was usually made a test of good standing, letters of dismissal being denied those in arrears.⁴⁰ Every organization had its share in the task. The ladies of the church made quilts, held oyster suppers, ice-cream festivals, rummage sales, and sack lunches. Birthday boxes were installed in the Sunday Schools, and entertainments were sponsored by various classes. Select groups frequently set the pace by forming tithing circles and self-denial clubs.⁴¹ The principle of the consecration of wealth naturally received more attention from the pulpits than did the various sundry methods by which such wealth was being accumulated. The envelope method of weekly contributions became widely popular

38 The minutes of a score of churches could be cited to illustrate this situation. The Petersburg church in 1911 paid only \$500 salary for a full time pastor because of heavy building indebtedness. The stronger Kokomo and Valparaiso churches were paying less than \$1000 in 1909.

39 Vehement protests were raised to the suggestion that the Convention assist churches in the calling of pastors and that standards for ordination inquire into the question of personal character and sincerity of purpose. Monticello Association appointed a local committee to examine the credentials of all strange Baptists ministers coming into their area.

40 Paris Crossing CM, 1900; Columbus, CM, 1905-08; Vernon CM, 1897; Ebenezer CM, 1899.

41 Liberty, Vernon, Osgood, Middlefork, Kokomo, Franklin CM. Serious objections were raised in many quarters to several of these devices. See Coffee Creek AM, 1900.

after the beginning of the new century.⁴² The inevitable result of such trends was an emphasis upon quantitative participation and activity at the expense of qualitative spiritual ideals, the depth and clarity of religious conviction. The pastorate itself took on the character of the promotional executive job.

Methods of extension in urban areas varied considerably. Stronger institutions manned mission Sunday Schools, from which important churches eventually developed. Superevangelistic efforts in tents and tabernacles, sometimes interdenominational, were made in a kind of mass concentration attempt to catch the drifting population which the churches did not reach. This task was often taken over by agencies like the Christian Associations, Rescue Missions, and the Salvation Army, who were supported by direct contributions of the Protestant laity. Where new intellectual standards began to undermine the literalistic premises of the traditional revivalist appeal, greater dependence was placed upon educational methods for the enlistment of members. Even where revivalism continued, its effectiveness came to depend on the maintenance of a constant educational program the year round. All the services tended to become more formal. The holding of the Lord's Supper became a routine matter, and heated baptistries did away with the breaking of ice on streams in the dead of winter. A direct correlation between revivalist activity and periods of depression seems to have obtained.⁴³

42 Indianapolis CM 1900-06. Down to 1906, the First church continued renting pews at varying rates in a kind of auction sale.

43 Indianapolis CM, 1888-98. The Woodruff Place church began as a mission Sunday School, and developed into a separate body after a successful revival held in 1894. Processes

A very considerable change in the government of the larger churches took place with the increasing delegation of the direction of routine affairs to official boards and committees. The deacons took over not only matters of discipline, but also the examination of candidates for admission to the church. They were responsible for the conduct of the worship services, including the securing of pastoral supplies. The trustees exercised authority over the church premises, with supervision over building improvements and repairs.⁴⁴ Sometimes an official board was specifically designated, by whom all matters of business could be considered before being submitted to the church as a whole. Official cabinets for the Sunday School often assumed complete direction of its affairs.⁴⁵ The congregation as a whole was content to receive and approve formal annual reports from the numerous self-governing auxiliary organizations functioning within its bounds. The typical church body of 1900 was far different, both in its organization and in its functioning, from its predecessor of fifty or seventy-five years before. Representative control of its major functions and antonomous direction of its subsidiary agencies were displacing primary democratic methods of government.

The Emergence of Additional State-wide Projects

One of the most important state-wide projects which of attrition caused 68 rural churches to be dropped from the Convention list in 1880. A considerable period of revival ensued after the panics of 1873 and 1893 similar in nature to that which had occurred after 1837. See Sand Creek AM, 1874, 1886, 1894; SCM, 1870-81.

⁴⁴ The trustees' minutes of the First Church of Indianapolis reveal that many questions of importance were settled finally by its sessions.

⁴⁵ Butlerville, CM, 1876; Valparaiso CM, 1879; Morgantown CM, 1893; Mt. Zion CM, 1892; Logansport CM, 1900; Greensburg CM, 1909; Columbus CM, 1912.

the Baptists of Indiana assumed during the closing years of the century was the providing of more adequate building equipment and endowment for Franklin College. Within the last twenty years of Stott's presidency, which ended in 1905, Stott Hall and the Shirk Memorial Library were constructed. The endowment was increased to around \$300,000. A surprisingly large number of churches contributed to the undertaking,⁴⁶ although most of the funds came from individuals of large means.⁴⁷ At the time of Stott's retirement, considerable evidence of dissatisfaction was developing within the churches over the increasing secularization of the instructional program of the college.⁴⁸ When President W. B. Bryan took over, he found it advisable, because of the failure of the constituency to provide much-needed funds for retirement allowances, to associate the school with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This move produced a serious rift with the Convention, since it involved the signing of a statement that no denominational tests were imposed by the school and that no doctrines of a strictly denominational character were taught. For a time, the College practically passed out of the official concern of the Baptists of the state.⁴⁹

A second general project with which the Indiana

46 Out of deference to church connections, dancing and card playing were explicitly forbidden in 1892; preference was given to non-tobacco users in the granting of scholarships.

47 Cady, *Franklin College*, 88-126. A so-called Business Men's campaign was launched in 1897-98, to which the Rockefeller fund contributed \$25,000.

48 The Logansport Association recorded in 1905 that it was informed that Franklin was still a safe place to send their children.

49 Cady, *op. cit.*, 162-72. Interested churches contributed about one-tenth of the \$215,000 realized by the endowment drive of 1911-13. The College withdrew from the Carnegie Foundation in 1919, and resumed its intimate connection with the States Convention.

Baptists became concerned developed out of the necessity of making provision for the care of aged Baptist ministers. As early as 1882, the Convention appointed a committee to receive contributions for immediate relief. Two per cent. of the annual income of the Convention was allocated to accumulate as a permanent endowment fund for this purpose. In 1885 a Baptist Ministers' Aid Society was organized at Logansport and incorporated under the laws of the state, a move which was endorsed by the Convention and a number of the Associations.⁵⁰ The first tangible move of the Society was the acquisition, in cooperation with the Baptists of Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin, of the property of a defunct seminary at Fenton, Michigan. A home which could accommodate from twenty to twenty-five persons was opened in October, 1888. The Society also assumed responsibility for helping a large number of indigent ministers living within the area of the five cooperating states.⁵¹

The Indiana churches did not respond very generously to the pleas of the Aid Society. They furnished around one-third of the beneficiaries and contributed less than ten per cent of the funds. A Managing Committee of the Convention was appointed to solicit for the cause in 1895, but its repeated suggestion that a schedule of dues be applied to the pastors of the state in order to secure funds received no response from them.⁵²

50 SCM, 1882, 1885. Logansport, Laughery, Monticello, Long Run, Evansville, Tippecanoe, Harmony, Brownstown Associations cooperated.

51 Smith, 395-98; Logansport AM, 1885, 1912. Rev. H. L. Stetson of Logansport was the first President of the Society and Rev. B. F. Cavins of Peru was the Corresponding Secretary for Indiana. Seventy-five were being aided in 1895; ninety-two in 1902; 135 in 1911.

52 Preachers receiving salaries of more than \$1500 were

Better cooperation was secured after 1900, but the Indiana Baptists were never able to meet their proportionate share of the expense. When the first general budget for state expenses was drawn up in 1909, the Ministers' Aid Society was not included, a decision to which serious objection was taken by those interested in the organization. The situation was finally settled by the affiliation of the enterprise with the national Ministers' and Missionaries' Benefit Fund, in 1912.⁵³

Another institutional enterprise in which a fair degree of success was realized was the establishment of an orphanage, known as the Crawford Industrial School. E. C. Crawford of Plainfield donated two farms of more than 300 acres extent to the project in 1904; outside funds were secured for the erection of a \$10,000 building. The school was opened in 1906, with thirty pupils in attendance. For several succeeding years, the contributions were quite adequate, and the assets of the corporation soon amounted to more than fifty thousand dollars. Sixty-five children were being cared for in 1912, homes for many others having been secured. The Crawford Home in more recent years has been left outside the regular budget of the Convention, and the problems of provision, as well as of administration and supervision have been difficult ones.⁵⁴

The period under consideration also saw the establishment of a state Baptist paper. Following the Civil

asked to pay \$5 annually, the scale being graduated down to a fifty cent payment for those receiving less than \$500 a year.

⁵³ SCM, 1885-1912.

⁵⁴ A proposal for an orphanage to serve five states adjacent to Indiana was considered at Chicago in 1899. See Minutes of the Convention, and Logansport, Northern Associations, 1904-1916. The School was located near Zionsville. Mr. Jesse Moore of Indianapolis was for many years its sponsor.

War, the churches of the state were served by the *Journal and Messenger* of Cincinnati and by the *Baptist Standard* of Chicago, both of whom had previously absorbed other Indiana papers.⁵⁵ Rev. G. H. Elgin of the North Church, Indianapolis, initiated the *Indiana Baptist* in 1881, and after a year or so began to give practically his whole time to the task. Rev. U. M. Chaille was associated with him as business manager. Elgin was an able man, a graduate of Franklin and Rochester, and his journalistic effort attracted general support throughout the state.⁵⁶ His untimely death in 1890 precipitated the paper into a period of financial difficulties. Rev. D. K. McGregor was associated with it as editor. The organ was reorganized in 1896 as the *Baptist Outlook*, and again in 1903 as the *Baptist Observer*. The Convention was obliged to take over the *Observer* in 1908, assuming \$4000 of indebtedness and authorizing direct financial assistance from the state funds. The *Observer* has continued to be the organ for the Convention since that date.⁵⁷

An attempt was made to revive the Pine Lake Assembly in 1899. Baptists throughout the state were asked to purchase lots along the shore in order to finance it. But the entire scheme seems to have been

55 Rev. E. D. Owen's *Christian Messenger* had been united with the *Journal* in 1849, while M. G. Clarke's *Witness* had been purchased by the *Christian Times* of Chicago in 1867. The latter changed its name to the *Standard*. Rev. J. R. Stone of Fort Wayne and W. N. Wyeth were the Indiana correspondents for the *Journal*, and Rev. Harry Smith wrote for the *Standard*.

56 SCM, 1881-1890. Elgin was only 33 years old when he started the paper. Upon his death in 1890, the Convention gave him the unprecedented recognition of a full page memorial in the annual.

57 SCM, 1896, 1903, 1908.

ill-advised, and the project went into bankruptcy in 1904.⁵⁸

The most intimate contact which the Convention developed with purely business affairs was in connection with the accumulation of endowment funds. The principal gains were realized after 1900 in the form of bequests and legacies of fairly large sums. The treasurer was aided in the investment of the funds by the advice of several leading business men of the denomination. This provided a stabilizing influence for the state work. Fifty per cent. of the income was set aside for the retirement of outstanding indebtedness.⁵⁹

The current income of the Convention increased markedly after 1900. From a previous twenty-year average of some \$4,000, it rose to around \$7,500 from 1904 to 1908, and to much higher figures thereafter. Much of the increase was due to a deliberately organized Stewardship Campaign, which stressed the tithing principle and the use of the duplex envelope system for weekly offerings. The Convention machinery had been entirely overhauled in 1895, with major emphasis placed upon four managing boards for Missions, Education, Sunday Schools, and Young People's work within the state. Benevolent interests outside the state were confided to six managing committees. Thus the work of the Convention came to assume a more and more central position in the program of the denomination as a whole.

The shift from the simple organization and program of the Baptist churches of the frontier days to the elaborate institutionalized system of the twentieth century is easily the outstanding fact in the development of the

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1899-1904.

⁵⁹ SCM, 1900-1909. Acquisitions of \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year were not unusual. \$16,000 was realized in 1909.

denomination. Just as the earlier program had been involved in the prejudices and standards of a primitive agricultural society, so the new type of organization accommodated itself more and more to the viewpoint of the business and professional population from which its urban membership was increasingly drawn. In many respects, this new source of control was more intelligent and progressive than the older one had been. It certainly was more generous. In other particulars, however, the entanglements with business affairs and institutional maintenance took their toll. A great deal of the energy of ministers and others was sacrificed in keeping the machinery going, and the inevitable tendency was for church folk to take for granted current economic and social conditions at the expense of concern for the wider implications of justice and Christian brotherliness in such matters. Characteristic of the period was the meaningless rallying cry proposed by the Curry's Prairie Association in 1886: "Christianity and culture, patriotism, religion, and success!"

CHAPTER X

PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN TWO WARS

A Wave of Imperialism and Manifest Destiny

The rapid improvement in means of communication and the wide extension of missionary activity during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, accomplished a considerable broadening of the horizon of the Baptist constituency of Indiana. The churches also became much more responsive than heretofore to passing moods and enthusiasms in public affairs. President Garfield's death in the early eighties at the hands of an anarchist, for example, focused attention upon such strange questions as Russian nihilism and radicalism in general.¹ Child marriage in India was made the subject of a direct appeal on the part of Baptist women of the state to Queen Victoria. Other questions such as Turkish massacres of Armenian Christians, famine conditions in India and China, atrocities of Belgian officials in the Congo Free State became at one time or another the concern of Baptist groups from the State Convention down to Associational bodies and individual churches.²

This new interest in the public affairs of the world

1 This is evident from oration subjects and graduation theses at Franklin College from 1880 to 1895.

2 SCM, 1896, 1900-05; Central AM, 1895-96; Logansport AM, 1895; Ebenezer CM, 1900-01. Baptist sympathies backed Japan against Russia in 1905, and demanded more effective missionary protection in China.

at large became focused with particular emphasis during the later nineties on the circumstances attending the struggle for Cuban independence. Since the fight was directed against the dominion of a Catholic power, religious partisanship was added to political enthusiasm. The arbitrary association of these two factors is seen in the following resolution of the State Convention in 1896:

"Resolved that we recognize our Baptist brethren [unidentified], fighting in the Cuban army, as a band of martyrs to the cause of liberty, which Baptists hold so dear, and that we sympathize with Cuba in her struggle for liberty."

When the Spanish war broke out in 1898, patriotic sentiment and manifest destiny in America passed all previous bounds. The excitement within many churches was so intense that it interfered very materially with the performance of routine duties. The following enthusiastic utterances of various speakers before the Convention are suggestive of the prevailing attitude:

"God has just pointed our nation to a high mission—that of bearing a full part in the shaping of the future of the human race. We must not, will not recede from the task."

"Opportunity opens wide her portals. Those who in the sixteenth century took the sword to plant Catholicism in the West Indies have now seen their authority perish by the sword, thus opening the way for the Gospel of Peace."

Conquest by arms in the Philippine Islands as well as in Cuba was acclaimed because it afforded an opportunity to initiate Protestant missionary activity there.³

3 SCM, 1896-1900; Tippecanoe AM, 1902. Baptist Home Missions in 1902 were being conducted in Cuba, Porto Rico, Hawaii, and Alaska, as well as among twenty-nine alien nationalities in the United States. It was Senator Beveridge of Indiana who delivered the classic defense of the imperialistic policy in Congress.

As a concomitant of the hostile feeling directed against the Spanish Catholic power in Cuba, a virulent, though short-lived, nativist agitation made its appearance within the churches. The Home Mission Society especially took full advantage of the situation. Said one of its representatives before the Convention in 1902:

"If they [Catholic aliens] had the power within their unholy grasp, they would . . . dismantle the home, put a cross above the little red school house, . . . hide the Man of Nazareth behind crucifixes and idols, and thwart the whole plan of God Almighty to make America the leader among the nations of the earth to prepare for Christ's coming. . . . The idea that Christianity is to win its most brilliant triumphs in China, India, and Africa is, to my mind, absurd. The Anglo-Saxon race was born to rule the world."⁴

Another argued that the fate of American institutions rested, in reality, with those home missionaries who were grappling with the false teachers of European atheism, nihilism, socialism, and Catholicism. No man who loved his country, therefore, should hesitate to support the missionary cause. So strong was the appeal that manifest destiny was still the theme as late as 1906:

"God is not joking with us in bringing America to its present proud position before the world. . . . Its altruistic rescue of Cuba, . . . its combative determination that the Philippines shall not be selfishly exploited, all attest that the real heart of the nation is not corrupt. These show that the mind of God is being steadily . . . wrought out in bringing this nation as his chosen people into the divine destiny of being the world's political and . . . spiritual redeemer."⁵

4 SCM, 1902. This peroration closed with a reference to Theodore Roosevelt as "the man of destiny."

5 *Ibid.*, 1904-06.

Under such stimulation, Home Mission contributions from Indiana Baptists more than doubled from 1902 to 1907.

The conservative spirit emerging from the Spanish War was reflected in contemporary pronouncements on economic questions. On the morrow of the assassination of President McKinley, the Baptist State Convention took severely to task those so-called "best citizens" who supported papers "which if not directly anarchistic in their teachings, do so pollute the mind that it is easily prepared for the reception and growth of this accursed doctrine." Several Associations at this time flatly opposed the cause of organized labor.⁶ Considerable alarm was expressed over the spread of unorthodox opinions. Patriotism, it was declared, demanded that the Baptists preach the gospel "without disputings and doubtings."⁷

The extravagances of the imperialistic fever which have just been cited were fortunately short-lived, for the effects of the war did not penetrate very deeply. In religious life, undercurrents of considerable magnitude soon asserted themselves, with the result that the churches gradually resumed their previous programs. A younger group of leaders was more or less impatient to take control of Convention affairs, and their vigorously aggressive spirit was soon to make itself apparent. Stott, Ogle, Neighbor, and Huffman had served their

6 *Ibid.*, 1901-02; Logansport and Coffee Creek AM, 1898; Bedford AM, 1901; Central AM, 1903. The latter organization condemned strikes and other attempts to secure the supremacy of labor, joined in the same resolution with mob violence and lynching. The arbitration of the anthracite coal strike in 1902 influenced the Convention to express the hope that all industrial disputes should be arbitrated according to the Golden Rule. Rev. Ogle had conceded, in 1896, that "unsaved society greatly hinders the work of saving the individual."

7 Logansport AM, 1903; White Lick AM, 1901-02; SCM, 1902-06.

day and were due to retire. It would not be easy for the Convention to find new leaders who could match them in character and singleness of purpose. The new influences first manifested themselves in an extended evangelistic revival.

The Revivalist Movement

The churches of the smaller towns and rural communities had profited little from the policy which the Convention had pursued during the latter part of the previous century. They lacked both the financial resources and the lay leadership which were necessary for carrying out the organizational programs which the larger churches were using with such good effect. Periodic revivalist efforts remained the principal recourse for stimulating vitality in many of the churches. A strong demand developed after 1900, therefore, for the Convention to undertake a state-wide evangelistic program.⁸

The new demand found an unexpected champion in the person of Mrs. N. B. Leslie, the chairman of a women's committee for the promotion of State missions. She began, in 1901, visiting needy churches throughout the state in a very unprofessional way. Her methods were nevertheless effective, and her work was widely acclaimed as the most valuable piece of missionary activity conducted within the state for many years. In a manner reminiscent of the earlier feminist impatience, she told the Convention of 1902 about the conditions that she had found, and challenged them to "quit this

⁸ The denomination had gained only two thousand in membership during the seven years prior to 1902, largely due to losses sustained by the rural churches. Many old churches, such as Vernon, Bethel, and Edwardsport were still obliged to operate on a budget of \$50 or less for the year.

playing at state missions and . . . put the money and the missionaries in this field."⁹ In 1904, special funds were secured for the purpose, and Rev. George M. Lehigh was employed as state evangelist. At first he concentrated his efforts on backward and unoccupied areas, using a tent where church accommodations were not available. He organized new churches at Farmersburg, Brazil, and Newcastle. Rev. J. L. Bryan and singer D. R. Landis joined Rev. Lehigh in 1907. Many churches by that time had begun to generate revivalist movements on their own initiative. A general spirit of encouragement and rejoicing prevailed throughout the state.¹⁰

The program received additional impetus when Rev. W. B. Pope came to the state as the new Superintendent of Missions, in 1908. In his first appearance before the Convention, he forced that body to face the facts that one-third of the churches within the state were pastorless, and that one-half of them had reported no baptisms in the previous year. He estimated that at least six full-time missionary evangelists were needed to revive the work, and proposed the apportionment of the sum of \$25,000 among the church to finance the program. He received a gratifying response. From a previous four-year average of \$7500, the contributions to state missions jumped to \$16,000 in 1909 and to almost \$22,000 in 1910. Eight evangelists were employed periodically during the first year, and eleven during

9 SCM, 1901-03. Mrs. Leslie worked continuously until 1907, raising on the field half her salary as well as large missionary funds.

10 *Ibid.*, 1904-07; Flat Rock, AM, 1907. Columbus and Kokomo for example held successful meetings in 1908-09. Again a positive correlation obtains between revivalism and a period of depression after 1907.

the second. No less than twelve new churches were organized, and the number of aided mission churches was raised to around thirty per year. During the seven year span after 1909, baptisms averaged four thousand per year, and the number of employed pastors increased by fifty. In addition, sixty-seven new church buildings were dedicated. This expansion of the state program caused the Home mission revenues to decline slightly, but the Foreign mission contributions registered a continuous increase. Rev. Pope's health finally broke from the strain of overwork in 1914.¹¹

The advance in educational phases of the church work was also very great during the pre-war era. Average weekly attendance at Sunday School increased thirteen thousand from 1910 to 1915, and a large number of schools adopted the Graded Lesson series.¹² Rev. Seldon L. Roberts became the Director of Religious Education in 1912, under appointment by the Publication Society. He worked out a unified program for Sunday Schools and Young Peoples Unions, which included a summer Assembly at Franklin College. With the co-operation of Rev. U. S. Clutton, chairman of the Convention's Committee on Religious Education, a promising beginning was made by Roberts in the conducting of Daily Vacation Bible Schools. District institutes were

11 SCM, 1909-16. Charles E. Watkins and G. H. Jayne became the state evangelists in 1912. New work was started at Gary and Clinton, and Rev. O. B. Sarber was appointed Superintendent of city missions for Indianapolis. A University pastorate was established at Bloomington in 1916. The net increase of membership during 1909-16 was 10,000 although the figures for more than a hundred defunct churches ceased to be counted.

12 Material covering seventeen grades had been prepared by the Publication Society in 1908. 450 active schools reported statistics in 1915.

held throughout the state, and a "Standard of Excellence" was adopted for the Young People's Unions.¹³

An element of irony in the situation developed from the fact that the rural churches on whose behalf the program had been started originally by Mrs. Leslie and Rev. Lehigh shared very lightly in the gains. A factual survey made in 1913 of some 276 active village and country churches revealed that 220 of the number could not afford resident pastors, and that only thirty-three maintained full-time services. The over-crowding of churches was frequently found to be a problem. Behind the general decline of rural churches was the stripping of the leadership from such communities by population movement into the cities, along with the loss of indigenous recreational and social life. The Convention finally recommended, in 1915, that the small bodies should seek either organic union with neighboring Baptist churches, or should try to cooperate with other denominational groups as community enterprises.¹⁴

The period before the war did not escape entirely the urge to create additional machinery. A Men's Brotherhood for the state was organized at Peru in 1907. A special Managing Board of the Convention was created for the new body, and liberal space was allotted to it in the *Baptist Observer*. Its purposes and objectives were rather indefinite and the movement never spread widely. It was fairly active around 1912, but died down after 1915.¹⁵ The women attempted to form a similar

¹³ Stevens, 61-64; SCM, 1909-13. Rev. C. M. Phillips preceded Roberts. The Publication Society also sustained two colporteurs within the state, and active missionary work in both Indianapolis and the Calumet district. B. Y. P. U. attendance increased 2800 from 1910 to 1915.

¹⁴ SCM, 1915.

¹⁵ The declared aims of the Brotherhood were "Fellow-

group in 1911, called the Women's Baptist Missionary Society of Indiana. It promoted some missionary education, and held an annual meeting in connection with the Convention. But the women succeeded little better than the men in developing an integrated program. There seems to have been little need for the latter organization, in fact, in view of the regular missionary circles within the churches.¹⁶

The Unified Missions Plan

The rapid expansion of missionary activity in the opening decade of the twentieth century made imperative the task of working out a more adequate means of coordinating the entire denominational program. The spirit of the time seemed to be emphasizing pragmatic considerations,¹⁷ and any effort at reorganization had an obvious target in the vicious system of competitive solicitation which had so long prevailed. An initial step was taken in 1907, when the Northern Baptist Convention was organized. Prior to this date the anniversaries of the various societies had simply been arranged simultaneously at the same place. Now there was created a semblance of organic unity between them,

ship, citizenship, and sympathy for Christian progress." Members were supposed to wear symbolic buttons in patriotic colors. Only twenty-five to thirty units were ever active in the state at any one time. Carlos M. Dinsmore was for several years the director of publicity for the Brotherhood, and he regularly belabored pastors for not according it more support.

16 *Minutes of the Women's Baptist Missionary Society of Indiana, 1911-1918. MS.* The Society started a circulating library, appointed counsellors to befriend College students, and suggested tentative apportionments for missionary contributions.

17 A spokesman for foreign missions declared before the Convention, in 1908, that the preëminence of Christianity was to be measured, not by its dogmatic authority but by its accomplishments. Other great faiths, he affirmed, contained fragments of truth.

the general supervision of their policies being confided to a representative Convention. Each Society remained a separate legal entity, with full administrative autonomy, but the plan included all in a single budgetary system.¹⁸

The Northern Baptist Convention made no attempt to force any uniform system upon the various states. The main lines of policy were gradually worked out, however, to the effect that the State Conventions should assume responsibility for the collection of missionary contributions for all agencies, the total amount being distributed according to a prearranged scale.¹⁹ The plan as adopted by the Indiana Convention in 1915 corresponded in general with the practice of neighboring states. A General Headquarters office was established in Indianapolis, which directed missionary propaganda and distributed the funds collected.²⁰ The cooperating agencies shared administrative costs in proportion to the amounts received.

The adoption in 1915-16 of the unified budget and the establishment of a coordinated promotional program with

18 An abortive effort was made at St. Louis in 1905 to unite all the Baptists of the continent in a General Convention. In the 1907 arrangement, State Conventions were granted ten delegates each with an additional one for every group of ten Associations above the first ten. Each church was permitted one delegate, and an extra one for every 100 members. The national Convention, of course, assumed the complexion of the area in which it was held. See Newman, 522, 526-28.

19 SCM, 1908-14. Prior to the final arrangement in Indiana the churches were urged to take weekly missionary offerings and to transmit the funds to the state office each month, indicating the destination of each sum.

20 The funds were at first divided: 30% to State Missions, 28% to the Foreign Society, 20% to the Home Society, 6% to the Publication Society, 5% each to the Crawford Home and Education, 4% to the Aged Ministers' Home, and the remainder 2% to the Northern Baptist Convention. This general plan was worked out at a meeting of State Superintendents at Cleveland in December, 1914. The distribution of percentages was subject to review each year.

Convention headquarters offices at Indianapolis began a new era in the Baptist work of the state. Prior to this time the Convention office had been in the private residence of the State Secretary, wherever he happened to make his home, and additional individuals had been employed for state work of various kinds as occasion demanded. Representatives of other special denominational interests had acted as their own collecting and forwarding agents. Under the new plan the state was divided into three districts with a resident District Superintendent located in each one of these areas. These men were accessible to the churches for whatever needed doing, with enough time available to make some impression upon the problems which they encountered. They often went beyond purely promotional work to hold revivalist meetings and to mediate in local difficulties arising within the several churches. Thus the prosperity of the churches themselves became the end to be achieved, quite apart from their importance as prospective sources from which revenues for missionary purposes could be derived. This direct contact of a resident superintendency with the churches, combined with a central directing office, constituted probably the most valuable features of the new arrangement.

Several constitutional changes accompanied the new plan. An Executive Board of thirty-six members was created to serve on a three-year tenure, one-third of the personnel being renewable annually. Vacancies in the Executive Board were filled by Convention vote from nominations made by a committee consisting of one representative from each Associational delegation attending the annual session of the Convention. With the Board rested the appointment of the Superintendent,

the state missionaries, and the district promotional workers, as well as power to act on all applications from churches seeking aid.²¹

The controlling committee thus selected was calculated to be a fairly responsible and unified group, since the power of selection rested with the nominating body acting as a single unit. On the other hand, the new scheme afforded only indirect representation to the several hundred supporting churches, who were traditionally the only really authoritative units under Baptist polity. Participation of the church delegates attending the annual Convention in the selection of the personnel of the crucial nominating committee was not always an effective method of keeping the State program in line with the wishes of the rank and file of the church membership. Politically-minded leaders, furthermore, who could control the choice of personnel of the nominating committee either at the Convention session itself or by previous influence exerted at Associational meetings might make of the new procedure something quite other than democratic in character.

The work under the unified budget plan was inaugurated under a change of state leadership. As a result of Rev. Pope's physical breakdown in the summer of 1914, Rev. O. B. Sarber, who had recently resigned as the Superintendent of Missions in Indianapolis, directed the missionary solicitation during the remainder of the Convention year and presented the annual report at the Convention session in October. During the following year, Rev. Sarber's services were discontinued, and the President of the Convention, Rev. Carlos M. Dinsmore of Evansville, virtually assumed the duties of

21 SCM, 1915-16.

State Superintendent. At the Convention of 1915, he took over as Pope's successor. Rev. T. J. Parsons and Rev. Walfred Lindstrom were chosen as district workers in 1916, and Rev. S. G. Huntington joined them in the following year.²²

The churches accorded wide acceptance to the unified budget arrangement, and the swelling tide of prosperity, incidental to the war period, greatly facilitated the raising of funds. A Five Year Plan launched by the Northern Baptist Convention added weight to the expansionist propaganda, and the total missionary budget for Indiana was increased in 1918 to the unprecedented figure of approximately \$100,000. In spite of a certain amount of deference paid to evangelistic activities, the new policy was centered around the promotion of promising but expensive enterprises in various urban areas.²³ The State Board was especially attracted to the initiation of new work among the rapidly growing foreign population in the Calumet district near the southern shore of Lake Michigan, in cooperation with the Home Mission Society. This interest claimed almost one-third of the entire state budget in 1918.²⁴ The many struggling church-

22 SCM, 1914-17. The first president of the Executive Board was Rev. A. M. Bailey of Peru, who had been associated with Rev. Dinsmore in the Men's Brotherhood movement.

23 SCM, 1916-18. No less than 410 churches sent in their offerings undesignated in 1918. Only one evangelist and three women workers were employed for rural work. Charles E. Watkins, the evangelist, resigned in 1917, his work being taken over partially by the District Superintendents.

24 *Ibid.* The figures were \$10,000 to the Calumet district in a total States budget of \$31,450. 39 mission churches were aided in 1916, 32 in 1917, and 26 in 1918. Meanwhile, \$10,000 of indebtedness of the Convention was cleared away. In addition to Gary and Hammond, a number of churches in Terre Haute, Fort Wayne, and South Bend were generously aided. \$10,000 was loaned to the Hammond church in 1917 and \$5,000 additional was contributed in 1918. The Home

es with quarter or half-time services realized comparatively little aid from the new program. Either from the shift of promotional emphasis or as a result of the changing attitude of society generally during the war period, the yearly number of baptisms sharply declined.

The assumption of wide directive power by the Executive Board of the Convention with respect to the expenditure of considerable sums in new and strange projects placed traditional Baptist relationships under a measure of strain. Direct representation in the annual Convention was available to delegates from all member churches, of course, and all meetings of the Executive Board were open to attendance of any member of a cooperating congregation. But these arrangements did not hide the fact that individual churches had less opportunity to influence policies than heretofore.²⁵ If churches or individuals chose to exercise the privilege still open to them of contributing only to those enterprises of the denomination of which they especially approved, such offerings would, as a rule, only release more of the general funds of the unified program for other purposes. With respect to denominational work outside of the state, the Board as a promotional agency lacked power to determine the nature of the varied benevolent activities included in the unified budget. It was perhaps too much to expect of human nature that Baptist individualism would accept such a program without protest, no matter how useful it might be on

Mission Society assumed responsibility for half the cost of buildings and working staff in the Calumet.

25 The Johnson County Association in its new constitution (1919) made membership available only to those churches agreeing in belief and practice with those "comprising the Indiana Baptist Convention." This ruling is an extreme example of the trend to make affiliation with the State organization the determinative factor with respect to regularity.

general principles. The arrangement was destined to break down in the later twenties.

Unionist and Cooperative Tendencies

The changing pattern of the relationship which prevailed between the various popular denominational bodies operative within Indiana is an aspect of religious history upon which surprisingly little data can be found in Baptist sources. Such factors were not the subject of official action, and, therefore, did not often find their way into the church minute books. The existence of other churches along side of Baptist bodies was taken so much for granted that the fact of their presence and the matter of attitudes prevailing with respect to them did not usually appear as problems calling for special consideration.²⁶ Denominational consciousness was such a desirable basis for developing loyalty to the general missionary program as well as for maintaining local morale that any effort to broaden fellowship across denominational lines was not calculated to receive very enthusiastic support from promotional officers. Much of the cooperative sentiment, therefore, did not go beyond the furtive hope that other groups would eventually see the light and accept the Baptist view of things.

Whatever trend was discernible was nevertheless in the direction of a more broad and cooperative attitude toward other Protestant churches. Claims of the exclu-

²⁶ Baptists probably had more in common with the Presbyterians than with other non-immersionist bodies because of theological principles held in common. Such questions as "falling from grace," or the "final perseverance of the saints," were frequently raised in opposition to the Methodists. The social distance of Lutherans was increased by racial considerations.

sive religious competency of Baptists were probably less frequently advanced after the opening of the twentieth century than had been the case in previous decades. The exclusive attitude survived to a marked degree only in regions maintaining close contact with Southern Baptist standards. In southern Indiana, it sometimes took the form of Old Landmarkism, which was an attempt to identify the Baptist church with that of the first century and to suggest the path of lineal descent from the latter through the intervening centuries. The illegality of so-called "alien immersion," where the baptizer himself had not been properly baptized was an issue frequently raised in this connection. But such considerations had limited currency. The cooperative spirit expressed itself most effectively, perhaps, in interdenominational Sunday School activities organized on a county basis. In the second decade, union evangelistic campaigns, union prayer services, and cooperation in Sunday evening services during the summer months were promoted in many communities. The Indianapolis Federation of churches promoted a city-wide evangelistic campaign annually, with noon-day meeting in a downtown theatre in connection with it.²⁷

A more far-reaching effort for coördinating Protestant work in the state was undertaken by an "Interdenominational Council" of Protestant churches, formed in 1909. It had no paid executives of its own, but was organized to facilitate through voluntary coöperation of the various state agencies the merging and federation of weak churches in small communities. Overlapping missionary effort was to be eliminated wherever possible. The Federation sponsored a survey of religious condi-

²⁷ SCM, 1914-17. On many of these points the author can speak from personal experience.

tions in three selected Indiana counties, conducted under the direction of the Federal Council of Churches. The report arising from the study clearly demonstrated the need for a more unified religious program in the areas examined, but no way was found to implement its proposals. The Baptist State Convention cooperated actively in the work of the Council. Dr. Frederick E. Taylor of Indianapolis was for several years head of its committee on evangelism.²⁸ The Interdenominational Council was probably more important for its implications, however, than for its permanent accomplishments. It did not survive the distractions of the period of the Great War.

The tendency to outgrow denominational exclusiveness is seen also in the adoption of more liberal policies of transferring church membership. Several churches in northern Indiana began to grant church letters of recommendation and good standing to members desiring to unite with Presbyterian, United Brethren, and Methodist organizations during the second decade of the century. The reception of members by letters from General Baptist or Christian bodies was the common practice in many areas. Rebaptism was usually required of those who came by letter from non-immersionist churches.²⁹ Much more general was the gradual abandonment of early practices of close communion.

It is not surprising, in view of the trend toward a broadening of Protestant fellowship, that attempts

28 SCM, 1909-17. Rev. Edgar L. Williams served as Secretary of the Council. Local units have survived in several places. Four county-wide evangelistic campaigns were organized.

29 There are several instances where immersion was apparently not required. See Valparaiso CM, 1914-1919; Logansport CM, 1916-28; Franklin CM.

should have been made to accomplish a more thoroughgoing union of kindred Baptist bodies within the state. The suggestion seems to have arisen from developments outside of Indiana in connection with successive meetings of the Baptist World Alliance.³⁰ Two minor Indiana Baptist groups not associated with the Convention were members of the World Alliance, namely, the Association of Free Will Baptists in the northeastern corner of the state and the General Baptist Liberty Association in the southwestern "pocket" area. It was with these two groups that attempts at union were made.

Union with the Free Baptists was accomplished without great difficulty. The objectionable predestinarian features of the old Regular Baptist creed had long since disappeared, and there was no real excuse for the smaller group to continue as a separate body. Fraternal delegates had been exchanged between the Free Baptists and the State Convention in 1906. Two years later a joint committee recommended that the two groups coördinate their missionary activities. The move was further assisted by the incorporation of the General Conference of the Free Baptists into the Northern Baptist Convention in 1909. Local difficulties delayed the final union of the Indiana churches until 1913. Missionary funds of the Free Baptists were turned over to the State Convention and the latter assumed responsibility for conducting promotional work among the Free Baptist churches. Their local organization was renamed the Noble-Lagrange Association.³¹

30 SCM, 1904, 1910-12. This body met for the first time in London in 1905. It met in Philadelphia in 1911. Both occasions were outstanding events in denominational history.

31 SCM, 1906-13; Stott, 92-93; Garrison, 182-183. The Free Baptist Association had been organized in 1887. About \$1,000 was paid over from the treasury of the Free Baptists in 1913.

It will be recalled (chapter III) that the General Baptist communion had been organized at Evansville as a liberal group under the leadership of elder Benoni Stinson in protest against the rabid "two-seed" predestinarian agitation of Daniel Parker in the 1820's. They had been at one time in their history affiliated with the Free Will Baptists of New England. Much water had gone over the dam since the days of Stinson and Parker. The General Baptists had extended their movement southward into neighboring areas of Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, Arkansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma where the churches clung to primitive revivalist practices with extravagant emotional expression in the altar services. Their more progressive churches, together with their college at Oakland City, were located in southwestern Indiana.

The outlook of this group was not encouraging. Located for the most part in Southern Baptist territory, where conservative tenets challenged the more liberal orientation of the General Baptists, the latter were refused fellowship by Southern Baptists on any terms but those of surrender. The smaller group could entertain little hope of extension of influence under the circumstances. In Indiana, the Liberty General Baptist Association occupied approximately the same area as the Evansville Missionary Baptist Association. In a number of towns churches of both types existed side by side. Traditional differences growing out of historic rivalry kept the groups apart in spite of the fact that the factors that had caused their original divergence had long since ceased to exist. The smallness of the General Baptist communion and their comparative isolation seemed to offer a clear opportunity for develop-

ing closer connections with churches composing the Indiana State Convention.³²

The attempt to achieve a larger measure of unity between the kindred Baptist bodies in southwestern Indiana was largely the work of Rev. U. M. McGuire, one of the more liberal Missionary Baptist pastors resident in this region. In 1913, he made the suggestion in the papers of both groups that a much wider degree of cooperation was entirely possible without disturbing existing affiliations or surrendering the special projects of either party. A practical demonstration of this fact was arranged in the city of Princeton, where the congregations of both the General and Missionary Baptist churches agreed to call the same pastor and to share expenses equally.³³ Both church groups gave formal recognition of the fact that wider fellowship was not forbidden by existing differences. The Evansville Association, in October 1914, approved the arrangement with respect to the Princeton church, and the contemplated eventual affiliation of the Liberty Association with the State Convention. The General Baptists were thereupon invited to accept membership in the State Convention and in the Northern Baptist Convention. In October 1915, the General Association of the General

32 The differences were of minor character. General Baptists were usually less concerned with close communion than were neighboring Missionary Baptist churches. They did not subscribe to the doctrine of final perseverance of the saints, and were not concerned about "alien immersion."

33 *General Baptist Messenger*, June 26, July 10, 1913. Wrote McGuire: "All Baptists, open, close, broad, narrow, liberal, stingy, missionary, anti-missionary and omissionary . . . general, particular, and not so very particular, are mine. They may not be just what I want them to be; but God bless them, they are mine." President W. P. Dearing of Oakland City College cooperated with McGuire in the project and himself accepted the pastorate at Princeton in 1914.

Baptists likewise agreed that under the terms of their constitution as "liberal Baptists," the churches of the Northern Baptist Convention were entitled to full fellowship of their group. The *General Baptist Messenger* hailed the move as a means of ending their isolation.³⁴

The actual consummation of union, however, was far from being realized. Relations became very cordial and the suggestion of a policy of exchange of pastors was made in various quarters.³⁵ But it was possible to interpret the action of both sides simply as an invitation for the other party to come over and join them, neither group probably wanting to take responsibility for frustrating the proposal of union. Since there was little point in the Liberty Association asking the other Baptists of Indiana to join their smaller body, extending as it did into Southern Baptist territory, the proposal simmered down to a request that the General Baptist churches in Indiana submit their statistics to the State Convention and accept apportionments under the unified missions budget. To these specific suggestions the smaller group demurred. Dr. Dearing was afraid that any free exchange of pastors would attract promising young men into the larger body of churches, thus alienating support of prominent laymen for Oakland City College. Nor would he agree to coördinate the work of Oakland City and Franklin Colleges under the general guidance of the Education Board of the National Convention.³⁶

34 *Baptist Observer*, April 30, 1914; *General Baptist Messenger*, June 23, 1914. Articles II and III of the General Baptist constitution admitted "liberal Baptists" to membership.

35 At Boonville the General Baptists invited a Missionary Baptist preacher to become their pastor, and there were other similar instances.

36 Dearing to McGuire, May 17, 1916, October-November.

The united program of the two churches at Princeton came to an end in conjunction with an unfortunate resurgence of Old Landmarkist agitation within the churches of the Evansville Association. Dr. Dearing's successor as pastor of the union church in Princeton, a man from the South, raised this issue shortly after he began his pastorate and thereby brought the coöperative program to an abrupt end. A joint committee appointed in an effort to heal the breach failed in its efforts.³⁷

The failure of the attempt to unite with the General Baptists can probably be attributed to the absence of any general desire in either camp to effect a genuine union. The mere demonstration from a kind of legalistic point of view that coöperation was definitely possible rested upon too meager a foundation of preparation and understanding to really accomplish the end. The connections of the Liberty Association outside of Indiana were a major obstacle for which no solution was proposed by the Missionary group. The most unfortunate result was the driving of both parties into a more conservative position than they had occupied before the agitation

1916. The latter proposal arose out of requests by Dr. Dearing that a man be found to conduct an endowment drive for his College.

37 Correspondence of U. M. McGuire, MS. collection at Franklin College Library. At Boonville, where both churches were fairly strong, the Missionary Baptist church raised a barrier in January, 1914, by voting not to accept letters issued by any church not agreeing with it in condemning so-called "alien-immersion." Communion services were held on Wednesday night to avoid embarrassment in refusing to share the elements with visitors ineligible to receive it. On one occasion the letter of a former member who returned from a term of service as a Home missionary was refused because of the alien-immersionist rule. A minister whom they called as pastor was asked to be rebaptized. See Boonville CM, Jan. 26, 1914, May 3, 1916, Feb. 25, 1917.

began. One of the leading Evansville churches joined the Southern Baptist Convention and the conviction gained wide currency, perhaps through McGuire's advocacy of the plan of union, that the Northern Baptist churches generally were tainted with a dangerous brand of liberalism. From the Evansville Association in subsequent years came repeated protests against the so-called "inclusive policy" of the Convention, which agitation developed into a definitely divisive movement during the thirties.

An abortive attempt was also made during the pre-war period to unite the Disciples and the Northern Baptists. The proposal came from a leading spokesman of the Disciples communion in an address made before the Northern Baptist Convention in 1907. As in the case of the General Baptists, the principal historical factors which had been responsible for the Campbellite schism had long since lost their importance to the membership in both communions, and the remaining minor points of difference were of little more than academic significance. The Northern Baptist Convention in 1908 after a long debate rejected a proposal of union presented to it by a joint committee of the two bodies. As far as the Baptist churches in Indiana were concerned, there is no evidence at all that the project was seriously considered as a possibility. Traditional prejudices would have made union under any terms a very difficult matter.³⁸

A New Social Conscience

The various attempts described above to unify and coördinate the work of kindred religious bodies were

³⁸ Garrison, 182-183. The Disciples or Christians were strongly entrenched in city churches, and numbered almost double the membership of the Missionary Baptists in Indiana.

aspects of a broader spirit of progressivism. Within the churches generally the latter spirit sought to emphasize agreement on essential issues and to bring the moral power of religion to bear upon important public questions. The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, organized in 1908, led out in this effort. It enjoyed the support of twenty-eight denominations in directing public attention to social problems.³⁹ The Northern Baptist Convention not only coöperated with the Council, but appointed a standing committee of its own on social services at its Oklahoma City meeting in 1908.⁴⁰ The way was thus opened for a deliberate endeavor to consider the question of divergence between Christian standards and those operative in the world of business, imperialism, and international affairs.

Indiana Baptists had been brought into contact with an outstanding leader of this social emphasis as early as 1906, when Professor Walter Rauschenbusch of the University of Rochester addressed the State Convention. Active interest in the subject within the Convention was confined to a minority group only, but several of these men were given appointment to a newly created Committee on Morals. One of the first reports of this committee, made in 1909, suggested that time-honored problems of temperance, divorce, and crime could not be solved apart from consideration of larger question of poverty and the rights of invested capital. In line with this suggestion, the committee was renamed as one on "Social Service." The chairmanship fell to Rev. U. M. McGuire, probably the most careful student

³⁹ Garrison, 122. The famous fourteen-point creed of the Council called for such things as justice and security for the workers, abolition of child labor and the sweated industries.

⁴⁰ Stevens, 64.

of social problems within the ranks of the Baptist pastors of the state.⁴¹

The nature of the report of the committee in 1910 was sufficiently thoroughgoing in its presentation of the socialist point of view to constitute a wide departure from previous utterances of Indiana Baptists on public questions. Society as a whole was divided, the statement explained, into three classes, the producing workers, the dependents and pensioners, and those who contrived by force, fraud, or special privilege to appropriate to their benefits the fruit of the toil of others. In a Christian society where all would be bound to do such useful labor as the general welfare might demand, the report continued, the necessary elimination of the predatory and exploiting elements could be accomplished only by the educating and socializing of the working class, the church acting as advocate, moral guide, and promoter of "intelligent concert of action, both economic and political."⁴²

It must not be assumed, of course, that the Convention as a whole approved the interpretation presented by the Committee on Social Service. The fixed routine of Convention business sessions relegated the adoption of such resolutions to the final afternoon, when it was often pretty much of a perfunctory matter. Many of the delegates departed immediately after the election of new officers, which occurred in the preceding morning

41 SCM, 1906-1909. Rev. F. M. Huckleberry, President of the Convention in 1906, was responsible for inviting Rauschenbusch. John R. Mott spoke in 1907 and Shailer Mathews in 1908. Rev. W. G. Everson was the chairman of the Committee on Morals in 1909.

42 SCM, 1910. The report was signed by U. M. McGuire, J. C. Rhodes, H. L. Hook, W. G. Everson, and E. E. Thompson. It was proposed as a basis for future action, and its sentiments were repeated in the report of 1911.

session. That the Committee was allowed to continue to function for a number of years along socialistic lines is, nevertheless, striking evidence of the broad tolerance toward new ideas exercised by the churches during the era of rising progressive sentiment preceding the Great War.

Subsequent statements of the Committee suggested the advisability of promoting through the churches fraternal insurance, hospitals, and coöperative stores and banks. Governmental functions, it was also proposed, should be extended to care for housing deficiencies, unemployment, child labor, workingmen's insurance, old age pensions, and public health. The churches were asked to consider all such individual proposals on their own merits, and not be driven to an apologetic and timid attitude by those who raised the bogey cry of "Socialism." The following statement proposed in 1914 was the most forthright utterance of the series, and was approved only after an extended discussion:

"The present world system of capitalistic competition is wrong; it must be superceded by a world system of industrial coöperation, permeated by the spirit of Jesus."⁴³

Closely connected with the consideration of economic problems on the part of the committee on Social Service were several assertions relative to the imminent danger of war. The Committee declared in 1912, for example, that civilization was about to explode, and that the churches should proclaim as never before the gospel of peace, and encourage agreements between the working classes of all nations not to fight each other. The

⁴³ SCM, 1911-14. Other suggestions included encouragement of industrial arbitration and the appointment of court matrons.

pronouncement made after the outbreak of the war in 1914 was particularly significant:

"The terrible war, which discerning students of social conditions have long expected . . . has come, and is devastating the most enlightened portion of the earth. Civilization . . . is frantically tearing out its own heart. To blame any particular nation for commencing the strife is useless and unjust . . . The cause of the war is operating in all nations and unless America is able to profit by the experience of Europe, she must sooner or later take bloody lessons in the same school."

"This is not a Christian war. It is pagan and brutal. It shows how far the nations engaged are from being Christian. It clearly reveals the false position and moral impotence of a state church. . . . It is a luminous fact that the men who have risked their lives and shed their blood pleading for peace in the face of these mad nations, have been not clergymen but socialists. . . .

"The cause of this war is predatory capitalism, intrenched behind hoary despotisms, . . . and maintained by playing upon the ignorance, credulity, and weakness of the toiling masses. . . . While the people suffer and die, . . . the great money lenders, the manufacturers of war materials, the army contractors and the exploiter of colonial possessions fatten themselves on the people's misery. . . . It need neither surprise nor morally offend us if, in the reconstruction of Europe, the people outlaw predatory trade and private taxation, . . . and abolish the power of rulers to make war.⁴⁴

Individual preferences and points of view will no doubt determine the estimate placed upon the forthright utterances that were made by the Committee on Social Service. But the final verdict as to whether such words were the wild dreams of irresponsible betrayers of Christian civilization, as many aver, or that they may ap-

44 SCM, 1912-14.

proximate the prophetic proclamations of a modern Amos will rest with history and not with contemporary opinion. Persons interested in the consideration of such issues by the churches might wish that this record could end in 1914. Then the Baptist conscience was becoming awakened to the problems of church unity and a new Christian social order; a strong evangelistic movement was likewise in progress. The denomination seemed rapidly to be gathering new strength and unity as it concentrated upon the performance of its tasks in the world. But complete agreement did not obtain on such questions, and the future held in any case the prospect of a considerable amount of storms and stress. What might have been the natural issue of such developments we can never know, for the Great War intervened to effect an irrevocable change in the viewpoint of the churches and to give new direction to its program.

CHAPTER XI

AFTER THE GREAT WAR

The Carryover from the War

The prosperous financial condition in which the churches found themselves at the close of the war was the basis for a remarkable degree of religious optimism. Now that the world had been made safe for democracy by the war, and nation-wide prohibition of the liquor traffic had been achieved, it was not difficult to believe that a new world was in the making. After the Inter-church World Movement failed to command general support, the Northern Baptist Convention went forward with its own private New World Movement. The churches were called upon to raise, within five years' time, the round figure of one hundred million dollars. No explanation was made as to just why that particular sum was needed, just what kind of a new world was contemplated, or by what precise means it was to be realized. In this respect, the program revealed its kinship with the uncritical vacuity of extravagant war-time expectations. The effort to raise Indiana's share of this vast fund, some \$3,500,000, became the principal concern of the churches from 1919 to 1924.

The campaign was organized along lines suggested by the Liberty Loan drives. A quota was given to each church, and plaques were prepared for presentation to those first to go "over the top." Minute men were enlisted to visit lagging churches and to explain that

the self-respect of the Indiana Baptists, among other things, was at stake. By dint of strenuous efforts, about half of the huge sum was subscribed by the end of the first year. The peak of giving was reached in 1921, when approximately \$350,000 was contributed to the fund. About \$1,300,000 was eventually realized. The New World Movement was an outstanding financial achievement. No fewer than 438 Baptist churches within the state contributed to it, and the average per-member contribution to missions increased two and one-half times during the course of the campaign. Even after a sharp drop ensued in 1925, the level of missionary giving remained for several years almost double what it had been in 1914. The world was not made new by any means, but Baptist activities throughout the world were greatly extended.¹

Meanwhile, many individual Baptists became involved in a different kind of crusade. The Ku Klux Klan was in one respect the result of militant war-time psychology playing upon traditional Protestant prejudices. The abrupt ending of the conflict found terrific emotional drives unspent, which were easily exploited by unscrupulous men in the name of one-hundred-per-cent. Americanism. The Klan provided a convenient stepdown synthesis for the intolerance and the crusading zeal generated by the war. In Indiana, the organization fanned the traditional hatred and fear of Catholicism among the older inhabitants. The refusal

¹ SCM, 1919-1925. Settlement work was projected into the Calumet district; the College endowment was increased by \$300,000; a state headquarters building was acquired; about \$100,000 was put into a church ediface fund. Indiana churches subsequently pledged \$50,000 for the Sendai mission and a similar amount for a girl's school in Japan. The Convention also pledged funds to complete the Science Hall at Franklin College.

of the Roman church to accept the public school system and its notorious failure in certain areas to support the prohibition cause were immediate issues. Hoary tales of Catholic church basements filled with arms were resurrected and widely believed. The Klan gained control of a large section of the Republican party in Indiana during the middle twenties, and achieved a position of almost complete political dominance.²

The Baptist constituency of Indiana was easily susceptible to the appeal of the Klan although they were not particularly prominent in its leadership. Enlistment varied widely from place to place. Many ardent dries were attracted by the fact that they were beginning to lose confidence in the intention of the existing police authorities to enforce the Prohibition law. Fighting blood was up, and there were many who did not see why the law should not be enforced by extra-legal means if necessary. In 1921, the Baptist State Convention reacted to the agitation by demanding that a Federal amendment be passed forbidding the use of tax funds by any governmental agency for the support of sectarian schools. Associational gatherings expressed their feelings by voting to defend American institutions and the flag against all enemies who might be threatening their destruction.³ In no northern state did the Klan enjoy a more enthusiastic following than in Indiana.

² F. L. Allen, *Only Yesterday* (New York, 1931), 63-69; *The Christian Century*, October 13, 1927. Membership in the Klan was limited to native-born Gentiles who owed no allegiance to a foreign power. Organizers pocketed a large proportion of the ten-dollar initiation fee. The display of robes, parades, and fiery crosses contributed a feeling of important social participation to many sincere, commonplace people.

³ SCM, 1921; Monticello AM, 1922. The amendment proposal was revived in 1931.

The Klan came to its inevitable debacle in the middle twenties. The high leadership in Indiana proved itself in time to be criminal and thieving. The generality of the membership in the organization, furthermore, could not possibly be controlled. Local units, nevertheless, remained fairly active for several years after its prestige began to wane. The last vigorous effort of the body occurred during the Presidential campaign of 1928. Many of the ideas and prejudices upon which it drew were too deeply rooted to be effected by individual failure or disloyalty.

The concern of the denomination for social problems of a more fundamental nature was not repudiated abruptly, for the habit of passing resolutions on public questions was fairly well established. The Convention did not hesitate to acknowledge its interest in the problem of world peace, and even chided the United States government for not cooperating more actively with the League of Nations in maintaining it. Very definite moral support was accorded to the Washington Naval Conference. With regard to the strife between capital and labor, however, the body was more cautious. It definitely deplored the peril which society sustained from such controversy, and advised rather vaguely that the churches should disseminate Christian principles with respect to economic questions. This latter proposal afforded an opening for the reestablishment of the Social Service Department of the Convention in 1922.⁴

For two short years, the social service emphasis was intensified. The Convention was asked, in 1923, to consider what obligations the churches might have

4 SCM, 1918-23; White Lick AM, 1921. The Convention rejected the idea of a U. S. mandate for Armenia. Rev. McGuire again headed the Department after 1922.

with reference to relieving conditions of poverty in the slums. Attention was called to the significant facts revealed in the report of the Federal Council on the steel strike. Study classes in governmental and social problems were inaugurated in the summer Assembly. But the tide of public interest on such questions was ebbing away, and the general response was apathetic. The Convention expressed indignation over the exploitation of childhood and motherhood in industry, but clearly preferred that the churches not become involved in the world-wide struggle over capitalism as such. A furtive hope was expressed that common sense would instruct the individuals directly involved in social tensions how to live together as Christians ought.⁵

In 1925, the Convention definitely turned its back upon the consideration of social matters, changing radically the personnel of the department. The social horizon of the churches was pretty largely limited, thereafter, to the enforcement of the Prohibition law, the preservation of the home, and the defense of America against Bolshevism and similar dangers.⁶ What was left of the social reform emphasis survived in the department of religious education, which was partially sustained by the Publication Society in Philadelphia.⁷

A similar retreat was experienced after 1925 with respect to the emphasis upon religious education as a phase of the Convention program. During the early

⁵ SCM, 1923-24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1925-31. Prayer was especially enlisted on occasion in behalf of the persecuted Baptists of Russia.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1920-1927; Stephens, 64-65. The Publication Society, in 1919, embarked upon a definite effort to interpret the social message of the Bible and to suggest practical approaches to a more Christian social order. Rev. O. R. McKay directed religious education from 1921 to 1925; F. G. Kenny followed him in 1926.

twenties, Young People's Unions throughout the state sent large delegations to the International Conventions, and volunteer groups in several areas gave local currency to the inspiration received at such meetings. Daily Vacation Bible Schools were widely extended. The Assembly at Franklin prospered, being particularly successful in enlisting young people for services in the church.⁸ After 1925, however, religious education seemed to pass under a cloud. Opposition sentiment implied that educational methods constituted a denial of God's fiat and grace in the salvation of men. Even temperance education was largely discontinued in favor of insistence upon law enforcement. It was such agitation, in part, that obliged the Convention's department of religious education to seek support outside of that body. Daily vacation schools declined in popularity, as did the Assembly. The official literature of the American Baptist Publication Society was openly attacked as heterodox. Franklin College likewise suffered heavy criticism.⁹ During the middle twenties a conservative reaction of large dimensions was getting under way.

In an effort to halt disintegration within the Convention and to find a rallying issue upon which all could agree, added emphasis was placed on evangelism. Exhortations to "go up and possess the land" were frequently heard at annual sessions. A separate depart-

⁸ About 150 persons were enlisted for church work at Assemblies in 1921-22.

⁹ SCM, 1920-31. In accordance with the policy of President Rainey, the Convention made no contributions to the College from 1928 to 1935, the Convention surrendering temporarily its appointment of directors. In 1927 Rev. W. R. Jewell of Cleveland became the Director of Christian Education under partial direction of the Publication Society of Philadelphia.

ment was devised to promote this work. A list of qualified singers and evangelists was prepared for the convenience of the churches. Congregations were coached as to revivalist methods. They should concentrate their efforts upon specific individuals. A designated Decision Day should be introduced into the Sunday Schools. This agitation served a useful purpose, no doubt, but it was on the whole singularly ineffective.¹⁰

The problem was obviously too deep to be solved by any shuffling of methods. The war had taken a much heavier toll on the moral and social idealism of the nation than had been at first realized. In the persistent emphasis made in 1917-18 upon the nobility of America's war aims and the extravagant hopes to be realized, the churches had been deliberately exploited for propagandist purposes. Most of them, it must be admitted, evinced no hesitancy in capitalizing upon the prestige which such activity afforded them. When the disillusionment with respect to such war propaganda set in, however, the churches must inevitably suffer loss of public esteem for their extreme commitment to the cause. Had there been a more realistic recognition of political and economic interests involved, or even a measure of critical realism in evidence in 1917-18, it would have spared the churches much embarrassment during the twenties. Religious sanctions, thus weakened by identification with war aims, were powerless to curb the demoralizing social forces let loose. Conventional ethical standards of dress and conduct were measurably discarded. Profit-seekers openly pandered

¹⁰ SCM, 1921-30. The State Superintendent, in 1930, lamented the fact that evangelism had not kept pace with other phases of the work. A 15% increase in membership was recorded from 1918 to 1928, but this took insufficient account of wastage.

to human vanity and weakness. Gangsterism and political corruption were subsidized by the thousands of otherwise respectable patrons of the bootlegger.¹¹ The natural reaction of many religionists was to withdraw to the entrenchments of an other-worldly orthodoxy, and to look expectantly for deliverance from on high.

Accumulating Difficulties

One of the serious embarrassments which the Convention faced during the latter half of the twenties was a steady diminution of missionary revenues. Agricultural areas were declining in prosperity long before the stock market crash in 1929. Many of the churches, meanwhile, saddled themselves with heavy building debts.¹² The interest in missions began to flag at the same time that local expenses were making a proportionately heavier drain on total contributions. The old apportionment scheme had to be abandoned temporarily in 1925 because of the protests of churches, and each congregation began to set its own figure. The Convention tried to halt the retreat by organizing Tithers' Leagues. Later it promoted a Church Covenant Campaign, with equal lack of success. Revenues continued to decline and drastic budgetary adjustments had to be made. Adherence to the accepted percentage ratio for the distribution of funds in the unified budget was abandoned in 1928, and during the following three

11 Allen, 80-83, 94-103. The Prohibition law was probably tested under the most unfavorable psychological conditions imaginable.

12 Rev. S. G. Huntington, as chairman of the Extension Department, had raised huge subscriptions for building purposes in scores of churches during the early twenties. In 1923 alone, he secured pledges of \$340,000. The value of Baptist property in Indiana doubled during the decade, reaching the figure of \$8,200,000 in 1930.

years amounts totalling some \$11,000 plus interest were withheld from the New York offices of the mission societies in order to keep local enterprises going.¹³

The item in the state expenditures that seemed to the Board most easily susceptible of contraction was the aid being extended to some thirty to thirty-five mission churches. The number of such grants was accordingly reduced to 23 in 1926, and to 15 in 1927. At the close of the decade, only a little more than six per cent. of the State Convention's budget was being allotted to mission churches. About one-third went for promotional costs and another third to support programs in the Calumet district and in Indianapolis.¹⁴ Under these conditions, a considerable feeling of discontent developed with respect to the allocation of funds. No immediate way of effecting a change was available as far as the direction of the Convention's policies was concerned.¹⁵

Another difficulty was attributable to the fact that recruitment of ministers had not kept pace either with the material gains realized or with increased missionary activity during the early twenties. It is not in disparagement of pastors of ability or of the sacrificial sincerity

13 SCM, 1928-31.

14 SCM, 1925-29. The Convention itself had accumulated a debt of \$30,000 by 1929, and about twice that amount was owing other interests by 1931. In spite of depressed income, \$12,000 was designated for settlement work in 1929 and in 1930.

15 The commendable work of the Federation of Baptist Churches of Indianapolis, for example, was opposed by some on grounds of favoritism to the capital city area. Subsidized by the Convention treasury, the Federation was attempting to integrate the work of a score or more of Baptist churches within the city. Parish limits were fixed, so that intensive home visitation might be possible. An Outer Zone was designated in which extension efforts could be undertaken. Rev. F. A. Hayward was succeeded as director by Rev. Clive McGuire in 1930.

of the group as a whole to observe that the general situation encouraged mediocrity rather than quality. The average salary to be had in all but a handful of churches was too meager to afford adequate compensation for the expense and effort involved in a thorough course of schooling.¹⁶ Other avenues of service than the ministry were open to the socially minded youth. Many churches, as a matter of fact, still preferred ministers without higher academic preparation. The disparity of standards between churches who could command the services of trained ability and the majority who could not, or did not, so do was so great as to make homogeneity within the ministry, and hence harmony within the Convention, practically out of the question.¹⁷ The need for the more thorough training of ministers was widely recognized.¹⁸

16 In 1930-31, the peak year for salary expenditures, there were 133 functioning churches within the state who reported no regular salary figure at all for the pastor. The fifty-five churches comprising the five predominantly urban Associations reported an average salary payment of \$2150 a year. In contrast, the churches of the eleven poorest Associations paid an average salary of only \$536 a year. The entire group of 343 churches outside the five Associations mentioned above, averaged \$890 for salary. About sixty pastors held multiple charges.

17 A questionnaire returned by 304 ministers in the state, in 1934, revealed 114 with College degrees and 107 with full Seminary training. A fairly large proportion of these had enjoyed both types of training. Only twenty-one had attempted anything in the way of writing for publication. No less than one hundred fifty-two who answered the questionnaire reported little or no education beyond the High School level. Some of them had never finished High School. Approximately one-third of the pastors had received at least partial training at the Southern Baptist Seminary at Louisville.

18 SCM, 1927-31. Concerning the urban problem, Rev. Hayward spoke as follows in 1927: "An experienced leadership is required. . . . We must clear our minds of the idea that an inadequately paid minister and an uncouth leader can attract men and women of large influence in these newer residential locations."

Conservative influences among the laity reënforced to some degree the religious opposition to higher ministerial standards. Some liberally-trained ministers were alarmingly radical in their social and political ideas. Business leaders, therefore, echoed the demands of conservative theologians that the pastors confine themselves to the old-fashioned Gospel of personal salvation which asked no embarrassing questions about higher criticism and social justice. The issue was sometimes presented in the unfortunate dilemma that one must choose between revealed religion and academic scholarship, there being no possibility of reconciling the two. A large number of the Baptist churches of the state were thus caught in this backwash of resistance to progressive currents of intellectual and social change.¹⁹

The lack of homogeneity among Baptist pastors and congregations became painfully evident in the unfortunate modernist-fundamentalist controversy which developed during the twenties. The basic demand of the situation was for the churches to have a mind of their own and to bring their best spirit and intelligence to bear upon the urgent problems of the day. The lack of integration within the denomination arising from the dearth of creative thinking left many church people with only the two unsatisfactory alternatives of either accommodating themselves to passing fads in thought and conduct, or of reverting to belligerent traditionalism. The detached perspective necessary for directive leader-

19 One effort to eliminate undesirable candidates for the pastorate, undertaken by a number of Associations during the thirties, was to require that candidates should appear before a preliminary Associational board before any church should ask for their ordination. Such measures were recommended by the Indianapolis, Union, Bedford, Fort Wayne, Linton, and Orleans Associations.

ship was not conspicuously in evidence. The churches for the most part were reacting positively or negatively to prevalent intellectual and social currents of the day rather than seeking to transform the situation to their own pattern.

Modernism during the twenties was in evidence far outside the den of the higher critic. Ancient taboos, such as those against dancing, the theatre, and Sabbath desecration were widely abandoned, and formal church discipline practically came to an end. The uncritical acceptance which the church people accorded to the war propaganda, the participation of a fair proportion of their membership in the Ku Klux Klan, and their alliance with the defenders of the *status quo* in politics and business all reflected an attitude of docility. In the prosecution of successive "campaigns" for financial and evangelistic purposes, more reliance was placed upon the pressure technique of commercial advertising than upon old-fashioned suggestions of spiritual power generated through prayer. The dignity of worship services was often compromised in doctrinally conservative circles by theatricals of various sorts, such as sensational sermon topics, and syncopated hymns.

But the aspect of modernism which attracted most attention was the general application given to scientific standards and critical methods of thought in matters relating to the Bible and religion generally. The investigation by reverent scholars of the authorship and authenticity of the Scriptures according to established rules of historical criticism disturbed many long-cherished ideas. It disclosed, for example, the close connection obtaining between emerging religious systems and the various cultures out of which they arose. The

results were especially disturbing to Protestantism because, since Reformation times at least, the dogma of the literal inerrancy of the Scriptures had been for them the principal foundation for orthodox doctrine. Many were led to believe that the church was being betrayed from within.

The trend of popular discussion was in the direction of the acceptance of a materialistic point of view, which denied the supernatural, reduced all religious faith to its subjective elements, and poured relentless ridicule upon old-fashioned notions. Religion which had enjoyed such high prestige during the war suddenly found itself in ill-repute intellectually. Most of the Baptist constituency sympathized with William Jennings Bryan when he began his crusade to forbid by law the teaching in the public schools of any theory of creation at variance with the Bible narratives. The clash between an aggressive materialistic skepticism and an embattled orthodoxy was fittingly dramatized in 1925 at the Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee.²⁰

Thus did the vogue of modernism foment misunderstanding within the Baptist communion. Conservatives were criticized for shutting their eyes to the demonstrated facts of scholarship and to the social message of prophetic Christianity. Liberals on the other hand were attacked for surrendering to the destructive philosophical implications of scientific thought and for subordinating Jesus in their enthusiasm for Karl Marx. Religionists on both sides failed to distinguish between friend and foe.²¹

²⁰ Allen 195-200. An example of sophistication may be seen in the fact that one University used James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* as a text for graduate study in Abnormal Psychology.

²¹ It is noteworthy that church records during the twenties reveal no criticism of the corruption of the Harding

The Fundamentalist Movement

The general religious reaction developing as a protest against modernism and higher criticism came to a head during the early twenties. It operated to increase greatly the influence of certain interdenominational religious groups in the Middle West associated with Bible Schools and Institutes. The revival of premillennial speculation during the period of the Great War had led to the holding of many Bible and Prophetic Conferences in which apocalypticism was stressed as the key to the understanding of the Scriptures and of current political history. Periodic conferences at Lake Winona in northern Indiana became a rallying point for conservatives. Moody Bible Institute of Chicago also exerted a considerable influence.²²

The rising optimism of the war period itself, coupled with the failure of alarmist predictions about the Second Coming to materialize, caused the leaders of such conferences, following the War, to shift their major emphasis to the defence of the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Under the direction of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association, organized in 1919, the program of Bible conferences was resumed. As the avowed opponents of all liberal religious tendencies, this movement gradually assumed the position of the champion of orthodoxy within all the popular Protestant churches. Abundant literature was distributed affirming the innerrancy of the Scriptures, caricaturing science and

regime or of the Klan, but much, on the other hand, against apostacy and modernism.

²² S. G. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism* (New York, 1931), 31-49, 229-245. The Bible Conference movement began as early as 1876, but gained its first wide acceptance during the World War. It received little support in the Indiana Baptist Convention during this period. See SCM, 1916-1918.

modernism, and setting forth a sensational exposition of prophetism.²³

During the early post-war period the Indiana Baptist Convention studiously avoided becoming involved in the fundamentalist agitation. Churches were cautioned not to "fall into obstinate conservatism," and the need for maintaining fraternal relations was stressed by such statements as the following one, made in 1918:

"This is our great day to demonstrate our real devotion to our Lord. Shall we be content to spend any of our divine strength or time or energy . . . in arguments over controversial matters, either of doctrine or polity?"

The Convention endeavored to "make all other plans subservient to evangelism and stewardship of life and means." One source of liberal agitation was eliminated in 1921 by the resignation of Rev. U. M. McGuire from the editorship of the *Baptist Observer*.²⁴

The issues of the controversy were brought close home in 1922. Local groups witnessed at first hand the unsuccessful efforts of conservatives at the Indianapolis meeting of the Northern Baptist Convention to force a fixed creedal system upon all the agencies of the denomination. The Convention affirmed, instead, that the New Testament as a whole was a sufficient creed. Fundamentalist agitation within the state nevertheless intensified although few could be found to argue the case with them. Many Sunday Schools repudiated the literature of the Publication Society in favor of the

23 *Ibid.* An International Association of Evangelists, with headquarters at Winona Lake, gave vigorous support to the movement.

24 SCM, 1916-21. Many conservative Baptists disliked the spirit of the fundamentalist agitation. The Logansport church, in 1922, refused to cooperate in a local fundamentalist Conference because of the violent attitude of their leaders.

fundamentalist material published by the Union Gospel Press and others. By 1925, embattled conservative forces were ready to demand a clean break with every form of religious liberalism.²⁵

Fundamentalists as a whole enjoyed the inestimable advantage of being able to state precisely what they believed. The religious fundamentals varied somewhat in length, but they usually included belief in the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, the blood atonement, the bodily resurrection of Christ, his imminent return to judge the earth and to set up his kingdom, and the affirmation of the historical accuracy of all accounts in the Bible including that of the creation of man. Any minister or laymen who refused to accept such a statement as comprehending the basic essentials of the faith could immediately be branded as harboring modernist opinions.²⁶ Any statement of tentative opinion which refused to accept the responsibility for solving definitively the questions raised by scholarly inquiry was also suspected.

Fundamentalist champions were fond of putting into mouths of modernists what they wanted them to say, and of proceeding then to demolish such straw men mercilessly. Liberals who refused to answer charges where absence of common premises made discussion futile were accused not only of heterodoxy, but of

25 Cole, 247-258, 292-3, 310-11; SCM, 1922-25. An attempt to force the Colleges in line by organizing the Conservative Protestant Colleges of America at Moody Bible Institute, in 1924, was followed by the debacle of the Des Moines University project later in the decade. President H. C. Wayman, later of the latter school, was a principal speaker before the State Convention of 1924.

26 Boonville CM, June 23, 1924. The pastor in this instance was forced to leave the church because of his unwillingness to accept such a creed, drawn up in his absence.

dishonesty and insincerity as well. This modern adaptation of the Inquisition was determined to excommunicate those who had betrayed the faith.²⁷

So strong was the initial impact of the fundamentalist attack that it looked for a time as if a new conservative sect of large dimensions was in the process of formation, breaking directly across Protestant denominational lines. That this did not occur among the Baptists may have been due to the fact that sectarian loyalty rested on the same literalistic premises that the agitators were proclaiming. The danger of a general secession of ultra-conservatives from the Northern Baptist Convention eased somewhat after 1926, when a compromise position was found on the basis of broad evangelical principles. But the tension did not quickly relax.²⁸ The State Convention leaders secured a vote of confidence in the Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Boards in 1928. The fundamentalist attacks then began to focus upon Franklin College. Contributions from the Convention to the College were discontinued by mutual consent. The state body went so far as to declare in 1931 that the high academic standards admittedly being maintained at the school constituted no adequate basis for Baptist support. The religious education program was also subjected to considerable criticism. The most extreme leaders threatened to withdraw from the State Convention if it continued to pursue what they called

27 Flat Rock Association was one of a number who voted a glowing memorial to William Jennings Bryan in 1925 after the death of this fundamentalist champion. The tributes were based partly upon his career as a political statesman, however.

28 White Lick Association declared in 1926 that the representation of churches having unbaptized members was a clear compromise with error. Coffee Creek Association, in the same year, declared itself opposed to all forms of Modernism.

the "inclusive policy," and there was a discernible drift of Baptist support toward various faith-missions of an irregular nature. Few actively cooperating churches actually withdrew, however.

Another important aspect of the fundamentalist position was the denying of the feasibility of social reform by human instrumentalities. God alone would correct an evil world, and that in his own good time. Meanwhile it behooved Christians to work assiduously for the fulfilling of the number of the elect so as to hasten the day of Christ's coming. A disillusioned and bewildered church thus found a refuge in its faith in the ultimate sovereignty of God. This emphasis was greatly increased during the period of the depression of the thirties.²⁹

The Depression of the Thirties

The financial effects of the depression of the early thirties were extremely disturbing. Fixed obligations in the form of building debts became increasingly difficult to meet as commodity prices fell and individual incomes declined. Heavy relief burdens fell upon church groups in industrial centers. Local and missionary revenues shrank still further, and the work in many places was kept going only by dint of heavy sacrifices on the part of ministers and laity alike.³⁰

The financial crisis forced a reorganization of the general program of the state work in 1931. Dr. Dins-

²⁹ SCM, 1928-1931; White Lick AM, 1926; Coffee Creek AM, 1925-26; Cole, 281, 327. The World's Christian Fundamentals Association showed little signs of life after its failure at the Atlanta Convention in 1927. The Baptist Bible Union never recovered its earlier strength after the Des Moines University fiasco in 1929.

³⁰ SCM, 1930-31; Logansport CM, 1926.

more accepted a post with the Home Mission Society, and Rev. T. J. Parsons assumed the position of Executive Secretary of the Convention. Two principal changes were inaugurated. The power of the Board of Promotion was materially reduced decentralizing the work of the Convention. In the second place, efforts were concentrated primarily on the rescuing of faltering churches throughout the state. Economies were effected in the expenses of the state headquarters. Contributions to the Calumet district were reduced by two-thirds.

The Convention secured the assistance of Rev. E. E. Sundt of the Home Mission Society in initiating the activities of the newly organized Rural Church Department. The plan included the revival of rural Sunday Schools under Associational direction. The number of churches receiving state aid was considerably increased.³¹ In six or eight districts in the southern portion of the state, various churches within a given area agreed to form a unified parish and to call the same minister for the conduct of their services. The decline of the country churches, however, remained an unsolved problem, although a comprehensive survey of the situation was authorized.³²

The need for a more comprehensive evaluation of the work of the Convention in the light of the new conditions was widely recognized. The report of a special

31 SCM, 1930-33. Rural work was first undertaken in Bethel, Orleans, and Perry County Associations. Rev. G. C. Mitchell became field Superintendent in the south and Rev. S. G. Huntington held the same position for the north. Rev. W. R. Jewell directed Educational work and Rev. Parsons continued as editor of the *Baptist Observer* in addition to his duties as Executive Secretary.

32 *Ibid.*, 1935, pp. 22-47; 1936, p. 16. New parishes were located in Perry County, in Mt. Zion Association, near Rockport, in Madison Association, and in Sand Creek Association.

Commission of Seven, submitted in 1935, reduced the number of departmental units from eight to three, namely, Finance and Promotion, Evangelism and Church Efficiency, and Christian Education. The new arrangement tended to set narrower limits within which the Convention agencies should operate, but it did afford needed focusing of responsibility.³³ The report also dealt with the relationship obtaining between the Indiana Convention and the general missionary societies of the denomination. After 1928 the monies collected for missions in the Indiana area had been forwarded to New York only after basic state expenditures were provided for.³⁴ For several years the division was approximately on a fifty-fifty basis. The national Societies, meanwhile, asked that the Indiana churches should resume full cooperation under the unified budget. They even proposed at one time to place the territory of Indiana under a separate Director of Finance and Promotion quite unconnected with the State Convention, in order to safeguard their interests in the missionary revenues.³⁵ The entire program of cooperative action was imperilled. Certain local leaders declared that their closer geographical proximity to the contributing congregations justified the Convention in deciding what should be done with monies contributed by the Indiana churches. Others stressed the ethical obligation to allocate funds in accordance with the total basis of the missionary appeal. Supporting the current policy was

33 SCM, 1935, p. 20.

34 Rev. Parsons was able to secure in 1931 the cancellation of accumulated indebtedness of \$11,000 due the Board of Missionary Cooperation.

35 One proposal was that the State Secretary's commission as Director of Finance and Promotion should be withdrawn and that Ohio and Indiana be joined under a single collecting agency for the unified budget.

a considerable degree of opposition to any highly centralized control of the missionary funds, due to the fact that all phases of the program did not elicit equal degrees of enthusiasm. The right of the State authorities to have a major voice in the distribution of missionary receipts was accordingly reaffirmed, and the counter-measures proposed by the national societies were rejected.

The question was already in process of being solved, however. It was decided that the percentage of the total receipts assignable to the general missionary agencies should be increased as soon as possible. The amount was accordingly raised to 53% in 1935-36 and to 55% in the following year, with the national offices agreeing to resume payments of their share of promotional costs. Cooperative action was resumed more fully in 1938 when a 60%-40% division of monthly receipts was mutually agreed upon.³⁶

By keeping the State Convention's own expenditures rigidly within its income, it was possible to retire all outstanding indebtedness by 1938.³⁷ With the beginning of an upturn in missionary contributions in the same year, brighter prospects were in view.

Depression conditions inevitably forced a return to a critical consideration of existing social and economic institutions. The 1930 session of the Convention, for example, declared that political and economic privilege afforded no foundation on which to build a Christian community. Industries which preyed upon human

³⁶ The State Convention budget in 1938 was relieved of an item for Franklin College, carried since 1935, in making the final adjustment. The General Education Board was supposed to assume the payment.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1935, pp. 18-19; 1936, pp. 31-32; 1938. Approximately \$90,000 was still owing the Convention from loans advanced to various churches by the Church Edifice Fund during the twenties.

weakness or misfortune were roundly condemned. President Hoover was heartily commended for his efforts to enforce the Prohibition law.³⁸ The *Observer* allotted increased space to questions of war and social problems. The able pronouncement made by the Northern Baptist Convention in 1934 calling for the elimination of unemployment, child labor, and the over-concentration of wealth was reprinted and underscored.³⁹ Local bodies suggested the advisability of investigating conditions of distress within their own membership, and of guarding their people against the temptations of enforced idleness.⁴⁰ The social conscience was not quite dead.

Much confusion still obtained, however. Now that the doctrinal aspect of the fundamentalist agitation had largely spent its force, an increasing number of conservative ministers took refuge from the perplexities of the deplorable state of social affairs by embarking upon premillennial speculation. Current happenings in the political sphere were fitted together into a plausible arrangement suggestive of the latter days. The proposal to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine was joined with the allegedly nefarious influence of the Roman church and the plan of Mussolini to revive the Roman Empire to form a pattern suggestive of the ten-kingdom

38 Prohibition sentiment had strongly supported Hoover's candidacy in 1928. After the eighteenth Amendment was repealed, Convention resolutions touching the question concentrated upon the more limited objective of the prohibition of all advertising of alcoholic beverages in newspapers, periodicals, and radio. See SCM, 1936, pp. 25-26.

39 *Baptist Observer*, Oct. 26, 1933; Jan. 18, May 24, June 21, 1934. The Convention's resolution called for the application of the service motive throughout industry. It asked the churches to defend conscientious objectors to war, and even suggested that national societies scrutinize their investments lest income be derived from munition industries.

40 Indianapolis AM, 1934.

federation spoken of in the book of Daniel. Christ's Second Coming and the rapture of the saints, an event which must precede the seven years of tribulation and the millennium, it was argued must therefore be at hand.⁴¹ Numerologists set 1933 as the date for Christ's Coming. As postponements eventually became necessary, it could still be plausibly argued that the expected event must be drawing ever nearer. Those congregations who had managed to keep themselves free from the great apostacy were exhorted by the modern Noahs, in a manner reminiscent of the Hardshell Baptists, to disregard ridicule, defend the fortress of truth at all costs, and to await confidently their deliverance from on High.⁴²

Time alone served to refute the most extreme of the alarmist predictions, but the question did not pass without precipitating a small secessionary movement. Several churches withdrew all connections with the State Convention and others were split because the denominational program continued to support projects of which certain agitators did not approve. The divisive movement was particularly strong along the western borders of the state. The temper of the radical group may be judged by the following statement by the pastor of a newly seceded Independent Baptist Church:

"It is a matter of denying the Lord Jesus Christ to send

41 This interpretation was most fully developed by Moody Bible Institute. Individual commentators pointed to the mysterious presence of the *fascio* insignia on the American dime. Some ministers interpreted the Blue Eagle insignia of the NRA as suggestive of the "mark of the beast." The group was much concerned about the conflicting interpretation of Judge Rutherford and the Watch Tower Press. See Garrison, 293.

42 Such agitation was widely current in southwestern Indiana. Imaginary newspaper accounts appearing on the morning following the rapture were used to advertise evangelistic meetings.

money to support a program that includes in its missionary personnel men and women who openly deny the Blood, the cross, the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection, and the return of the Lord, etc., Franklin, Mathews, Shirley Case, McGuire, Jewell etc. I am not in sympathy with this thing of pretending to love the Lord and believe His Word, on the one hand, and on the other hand to deny Him in supporting someone on the mission field, . . . in denominational college, or our own mission boards, who blaspheme His name with their damnable heresies.”⁴³

Beginnings of Recovery

It is perhaps a tribute to the religious vitality of the churches that they survived the demoralizing influences of the post-war era with their general program not more seriously impaired than was the case. The connections which held together the cooperative Baptist system were so tenuous that division was always in prospect. On the other hand, integration of faith and activity, if it was to be achieved, must be laboriously and skillfully planned. In spite of all the confusion of thought and action, evidences of recovery were clearly recognizable by the middle thirties in almost every phase of the work.

A very considerable gain was realized in 1932-33, as the result of a concerted effort in evangelism. A goal was set for 10,000 accessions to the churches during the centennial year of the State Convention, which ended in 1933. Each church was assigned a quota in proportion to its membership. Through the efforts of the two District Superintendents and Rev. A. A. Cohn, the director of the campaign, the program was extended to all parts of the state. Here was an activity in which

⁴³ Boonville CM, Feb. 28, 1934. The church split at this time over premillennarian considerations.

all could coöperate, and the goal was exceeded by several hundred. The victory was fittingly celebrated in the Centennial program.⁴⁴

Church activities in enlistment could not be maintained indefinitely on such a promotional basis. In spite of the continuance of aggressive leadership, therefore, evangelism entered upon a period of decline following the strenuous 10,000 campaign. Baptisms dropped to around 4,200 in 1933-34, and fell still lower to 2,900 in the following year. Achievement again fell considerably short of objectives in 1935-36, although a gain of 5,000 was realized.⁴⁵ The gains accomplished over the period of depression years were considerable, nevertheless.

With respect to the promotion of work in the larger cities the tendency was to bring it more directly under the supervision of the State Convention itself. Abandonment of more expensive phases of social work in foreign communities within the urban areas was, of course, a part of the general retrenchment program. It was agreed, nevertheless, that special consideration should be given to the problems attending the work in the larger cities of 50,000 population or more. A peculiarly urgent situation was that connected with the presence of 15,000 negro Baptist residents within Indianapolis, for whom the Convention took little responsibility. The exploration of the needs of this "new social frontier" was begun in a cautious way by the Indianapolis Association, in 1936.⁴⁶

44 SCM, 1933. An historical pageant prepared by Dr. A. E. Cowley was staged at the Centennial celebration covering the history of Baptist work in the state.

45 *Ibid.*, 1935, pp. 51-52; 1936, pp. 35-36.

46 *Ibid.*, 1935, pp. 21-22; 1936, p. 42.

The early thirties witnessed a revival of the effort to secure closer coöperation with the General Baptists. Rev. McGuire initiated the new project as he had the previous one twenty years before. After some cautious beginnings in which the opportunities for the broadening of fellowship and coöperative effort were clearly set forth, a joint commission got together in April, 1932, and formulated several proposals looking toward definite coöperation. It was agreed that delegates could be sent by the General Baptists to the Northern Convention, and that local Associations might pass resolutions requesting the churches to do so. Similar connections could be established with the Indiana State Convention. General Baptist churches located in the South were advised to organize their own State Conventions. Such arrangements, it was agreed, would involve no transfer of property, no abandonment of local projects, no submission to external control.⁴⁷

Objections to the coöperative suggestions were raised in certain areas within the smaller body under the accusation that the conference committee had sold out the General Baptists. At the meeting of the General Association at Oakland City in October, 1932, the Arkansas Association demanded flatly that all negotiations with the Northern Convention be discontinued. The proposal was not carried, but in deference to the protest, the committee's function was defined in such fashion, as to include extension of relations with other religious bodies in general. Thus the group again turned away from the specific proposal to affiliate with the Northern Baptists. The hope that the inclusion of the Southern

⁴⁷ In recognition of this *rapprochement*, one of the General Baptist ministers was appointed to the Social Service Committee of the Northern Baptist Convention.

Baptists in the coöperative inquiry might open the way for more cordial relations all around proved illusory.⁴⁸ The question still waited for a settlement.

One of the last expressions of the concern felt in some quarters over the lack of uniformity as to creedal commitments prevailing within the denomination was an attempt made at the Convention of 1935 at the recommendation of a Commission of Seven to adopt a conservative statement of faith which could be imposed upon all agencies and staff workers listed under the State budget. Since the several churches were fully competent to come to their own decisions on such matters, they would not be directly affected by the proposal. Nor could it affect, except by implication, the coöperative policy followed under the unified budgetary system. The proposal was therefore quite gratuitous in the opinion of many concerned. The creed was finally adopted, but with the amended qualification that it not be used as a test of fellowship, service, or membership in the Convention.⁴⁹

There was, perhaps, no phase of the general program of the State Convention during the early thirties more vigorous than that being conducted for the young people. The work among the children had long been efficiently directed by Miss Myrtie Huckleberry. Reverend Jewell succeeded in expanding and diversifying various phases of his educational objective. The Young People's work became centered in an autonomous State Council, responsible to an annual Convention of its own. Many Associational rallies were held throughout the state under

⁴⁸ McGuire MS. Correspondence in Franklin College Library (1930-1933).

⁴⁹ SCM, pp. 13-17, 28.

its direction. The World Wide Guild functioned in an increasingly effective manner for the girls. Year after year the Indiana churches ranked at the top or near it among the states composing the Northern Baptist Convention in the issuance of leadership training credits. About half of these were earned at the two summer assemblies at Franklin College and at Lake Wawasee. The remainder came from locally sponsored training programs. The program for youth training was rounded out by the inauguration of Pioneer Camps for boys and girls during the summer months.⁵⁰

In the fields of religious education a number of innovations were introduced. To the approximately one hundred vacation Bible Schools held annually in the state were added what were known as Church School Clinics, conducted by members of the State Convention staff. Around forty to fifty Schools of Missions extending over a period of days were conducted at various churches throughout the state. Where such schools were not possible, study classes numbering around one hundred fifty were organized. Missionary education was further encouraged through the reading of more than one hundred thousand volumes annually by members of the Baptist churches within the state. Practically every church within the Convention sponsored some kind of special missionary program during the year, the total numbering more than six thousand.⁵¹

50 *Indiana Baptist Annual*, 1935-36. The Franklin Assembly which lasted for ten days was recognized as the standard leadership training institution for the entire state. The Assembly at Wawasee was usually limited to five days only, and was dependent upon the courtesy of the Evangelical Association for the use of its facilities. Dr. A. E. Cowley was Chairman of the Department during these years.

51 *Ibid.*, 1935, pp. 50-51, 58, 23.

The Missionary Baptists were finding new means of giving expression to the outreach of their faith. The religious vitality of the churches had survived a period of testing.

Conclusion

The Baptist Church in the Middle West has been in a peculiar way indigenous to developing American culture. It has embodied from its beginnings on the continent, the twin ideals of liberty and democracy that have characterized the political history of the United States. Its origins were rooted in resistance to Puritan and Anglican control in New England and Virginia respectively. Baptists fought for their religious ideals in the War for Independence. They were among the first to carry the jealous regard for democratic liberty into the wilderness of the Ohio valley.

Always in close touch with the life of the common people, the church has reflected with remarkable fidelity popular feeling and enthusiasms throughout its history. Sometimes these were defensible, sometimes not. The frontier church, for example, cared little about the plight of the miserable Indians, which drove a sensitive person like Isaac McCoy into their service. The anti-mission agitation gathered its principal power from the spirit of provincialism also expressing itself in Jacksonian Democracy. The churches clearly reflected the expansionist fever of the forties, and followed popular passions both North and South during the decade after the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Similar correspondence can be traced throughout the period since the Civil War.

The economic and social heritage of the pioneer period has been a constant factor in Baptist history. It has revealed itself in the exaltation of the Puritanical virtues, in the distrust of artificial learning and culture, and in the fierce assertion of the dignity and worth of the common man. Academic training in the pulpit is still looked at askance in many places. But the superiority of American political institutions was, to Baptist minds, not subject to question. No matter how badly democracy might function at times in church or state, they saw no grounds on which its essential validity might be challenged. In fact the Baptists could on occasion be excited to downright persecution of alien groups, paradoxically enough, in defense of the principles of Americanism.

Satisfactory adjustment to a changing social order has been difficult for democratic churches to achieve. Adjustment of group interests are particularly troublesome. In some areas even the personal ethic measurably broke down. A complete rethinking of ethical principles based upon a fresh conception of what such ideals as charity, and righteousness, and brotherhood demand socially from the follower of Jesus is a large order. Such creative thinking may be painful and disturbing, but the victims of an industrial age cannot long be served effectively by a church wedded to economic power and to an exclusively individualistic ethic. The problem of the proper role of churches in time of war is also an urgent one. Courage and clarity of thought are the imperative demands of the hour.

The concern for creeds as such has been largely alien to Baptist tradition. The Philadelphia Confession served its purpose under frontier conditions as a unifying

agency where other standards were non-existent. But it was very lightly held by most of the early Baptists of the Ohio valley. The New Hampshire Confession provided a convenient compromise on mooted points. In actual practice, admission to church membership has been conditioned on a person's religious experience and confession of faith in Christ, not upon subscription to any creed. Denominational training has stressed traditional Baptist principles of polity more than it has formal theological beliefs. The right of every man to search the Scriptures for himself is one of the strongest traditions of the church. It stands directly athwart any effort to force a final commitment to any static system of doctrine. The bitterness engendered by schisms usually persists long after the immediate issues are forgotten. More of mutual respect for intellectual integrity on the part of those who honestly differ in their opinions, and a more adequate appreciation of historical factors involved will go far to obviate such occasions.

Finally, the Baptists of Indiana have experienced a remarkable institutional development since the settlement of the state. Isolated frontier congregations meeting only once a month have evolved into complicated ecclesiastical institutions. The various functions of the church have been differentiated; officers and governing committees have multiplied; auxiliary activities have been initiated so as to enlist the interest of every portion of the congregation. More formal methods of worship have been adopted by the churches. Magnificent buildings have been erected, pipe organs and robed choirs installed. Democratic church government has been subjected to serious modification in favor of con-

trol by official boards. The state organization has grown from a feeble effort to encourage sympathy for "benevolences" and to promote fellowship, until it has become a powerful administrative agency backed by a considerable endowment. The missionary enterprise has expanded to tremendous proportions in recent times, touching scores of alien groups in America and constituting one of the principal phases of the impact of American culture upon the world at large. War now imperils the entire enterprise.

The vitality of the church has always been measured by its capacity to absorb and transform through the power of its faith whatever of thought and event around it has been capable of religious interpretation. Its history, therefore, has been an integral part of its social environment. Its future will depend in large measure upon its objective awareness of the world in which it lives, and the perspective generated from an appreciation of its past. May he who seeks such understanding find herein a dependable guide.

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This sheaf of one hundred fifty letters was secured from relatives in Holman's home town of Aurora. They were addressed to Holman from religious agencies in the East and from many points in Indiana. The collection, now available at Franklin College library, is an invaluable source for Baptist history in Indiana from 1820 to 1842.

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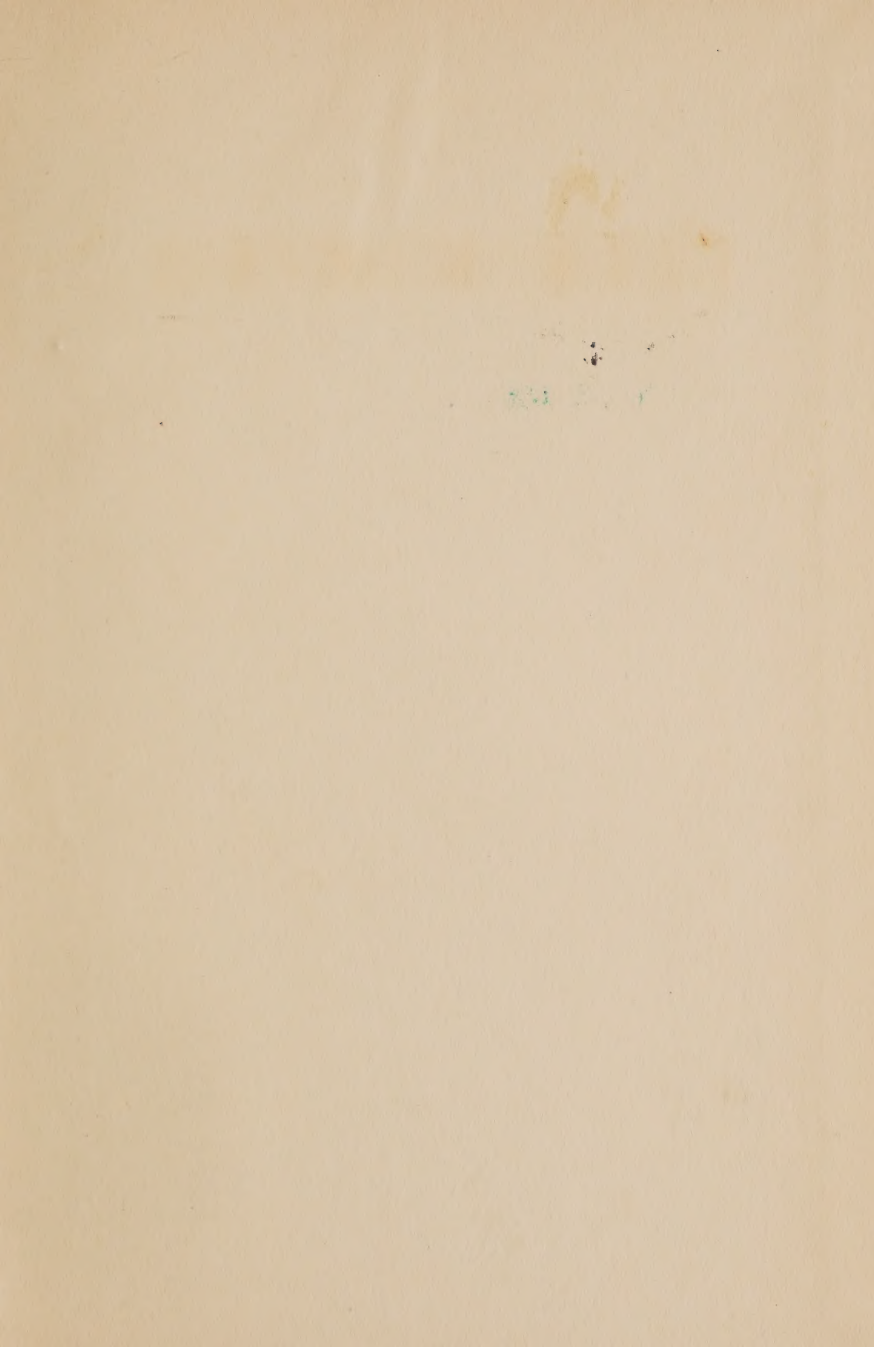
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